# THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

*Editor :* R. PALME DUTT

Volume 18 | May, 1936 | Number 5

*PRINCIPAL CONTENTS*

Britain and Europe
R.P.D.

Problems of Labour Policy
GEORGE HICKS, M.P.

Trade Unionism in 1936
ARTHUR HORNER

A Presidential Address
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# THE LABOUR MONTHLY

*A Magazine of International Labour*

VOLUME 18 MAY, 1936 NUMBER 5

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

## CONTENTS

Notes of the Month - - - - - - - Page 259
*BRITAIN AND EUROPE*
*By* R. P. D.

Problems of Labour Policy - - - - - „ 269
*By* GEORGE HICKS, M.P.

Problems of Trade Unionism in 1936 - - - „ 277
*By* ARTHUR HORNER

Presidential Address to the Indian National Congress „ 282
*By* JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

A Working-Class Peace Policy - - - - - „ 295
*By* HARRY POLLITT

Book Reviews - - - - - - - - - „ 316
Seeking the Cure for Mental Illness - - *By* Jonathan Kemp
Unravelling the Tangle - - - - - - - *By* E. B.

*The Financial Appeal* - - - - - - „ 319

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# NOTES OF THE MONTH

*May Day, 1936—Advance of Fascist War Offensive—Baldwin and Hitler—Shifting the Blame—Helping Germany and Japan—The Peace Bloc and the Fascist Bloc—British Aims—Hitler's War Plan—British Press and Hitler—Cross-Currents in British Labour—Clearing the Fight in Britain.*

ON this May-Day of 1936 it is necessary to face plainly the menacing facts of the present international situation. The issues of war or peace in Europe and the world are now reaching their decisive stage. The decisions on policy in the next few months will govern the character of the coming period. *Up to the present, the fascist war offensive has won the first round.* The recognition of this reality is the first necessity in order to determine policy aright. Italy's war on Abyssinia has gone forward without effective collective resistance ; and although the heroic struggle of the Abyssinian people against the poison-gas offensive of " civilisation " is still unbroken, and will go forward to the ultimate victory of independence, fascist Italy now prepares to establish its open protectorate with the connivance of the imperialist Powers in the League who direct their efforts to " conciliating " the bleeding victim with his bandit aggressor. Even more serious for the future is the advance of the Nazi offensive. Nazi Germany has followed up its first stage of rearmament and tearing up of the military restrictions of Versailles by the second stage of tearing up Locarno and remilitarising the Rhineland. If this step is completed by the fortification of the Rhineland, the road is cleared for the third stage of adventurist aggression in any part of Europe. The Nazi programme has received its official proclamation in the Hitler Plan of April 1st, offering "security" only for Western Europe and expressly excluding any guarantees of security for the rest of Europe. This Hitler Plan for future war has been received with marked benevolence by British

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Imperialism, at the same time as the French Plan for collective security for all Europe has been damned with faint praise. There is no excuse for self-deception as to where all this is leading.

THIS success of the fascist aggression, alike of Italy and of Germany, as previously of Japan, has dealt a heavy blow to the flimsy existing machinery of the Covenant of the League of Nations for the collective maintenance of peace. The small nations may well ask what confidence they can have in the protection of the Covenant after the experience of Abyssinia. Similar questioning as to the whole future of the League and the meaning of collective security is running through the minds of wide numbers. The old liberal-reformist illusions of blind faith in an imperialist League of Nations as a panacea for peace have received a salutary shock, which should lead to a new awakening as to the real character of the struggle for peace. *The line of the Franco-Soviet Pact is once more justified ; only the mass front, fighting in unity with the Soviet Union, defeating the pro-fascist forces within each imperialism, and compelling the establishment of effective guarantees for the maintenance of peace in unity with the Soviet Union, can isolate the fascist warmongers and build up the front for peace.* The lesson needs to be learnt by the peace forces in every country. Nowhere is it more important than in Britain.

FOR the very blow which the success of the fascist aggression has dealt to the existing weak and ineffective system of collective security is now being utilised by the self-same imperialist forces that dealt the blow, and that have in practice always been the enemies of any effective system of collective security, to proclaim that the whole conception of collective security has failed, and that nothing remains but rearmament and unity with Hitler. This was the theme of Baldwin's speech at Worcester on April 18, which is of key significance for the present line of British Imperialism. He proclaimed that the League was ineffective owing to the absence of the United States, Germany and Japan. He drew the conclusion :

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> There does not yet seem to be effective machinery for stopping a war before it begins if one party is determined to go to war and not to submit the differences in dispute to discussion and to arbitration.

This is the same line as in the National Government's Armaments Memorandum of March, 1935 :

> The existing international machinery cannot be relied on as a protection against an aggressor.

What is the conclusion ? The conclusion is : Come to terms with Hitler.

> Hitler, the dictator in Germany, has it in his power to-day from his position to do more at this moment to lift that black shadow of fear from Europe than any other man living in Europe. I say he has it in his power. God grant he may have the will. If he has the will, nothing that this country can do will be left undone, and I believe that if he can convince Europe he has the will, there is not a people in Europe but would co-operate.

There are here no inconvenient questions to Hitler, as in Flandin's speech last month, as to his intentions in Southern and Eastern Europe, as to his reasons for refusing guarantees of security in Southern and Eastern Europe, or as to his openly proclaimed intentions of war on the Soviet Union. Instead, there is only a pious, humble plea on behalf of the English people to have the honour of co-operating with Hitler in his godly work. Such is the outward expression of the alliance of the dominant forces of British Imperialism, represented by Baldwin, with Hitler in open opposition to the line of collective security.

WHAT does this argument amount to ? The familiar attempt of British spokesmen in a difficulty to throw the blame on the United States for its absence from the League as the source of all evil need not confuse the issue here. In the case of the Japanese war offensive American co-operation was not merely offered, but the Secretary of State, Stimson, came directly to Geneva to beg for co-operation against Japan, and appeal after appeal passed from the United States to Britain ; it was the British National Government that blocked the road, with Simon acting as Japan's attorney. In the case of the Italian war there was a period during which

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the United States made clear its readiness to co-operate in oil sanctions ; and it was precisely at this moment, in order to defeat oil sanctions that the Hoare-Laval Plan was put forward, as Hoare himself subsequently explained in his speech to the House of Commons on December 19, when he explained the genesis of the plan as having arisen because " a new situation was about to be created by the question of the oil embargo ; it seemed clear that, supposing an oil embargo were to be imposed and that the non-member States took an effective part in it, the oil embargo might have such an effect upon the hostilities as to force their termination." It was to prevent this disastrous outcome that the Hoare-Laval Plan was hastily concocted, which, though it did not succeed in being carried out, did succeed in its real purpose of postponing the question of oil sanctions and giving Italy time to prepare its poison gas offensive. When Hoare spoke, he could not dare to suggest that the failure to impose oil sanctions was on account of the United States, because it was well known that the American machinery of co-operation was ready, and Hoare's whole argument was that the imposition of oil sanctions might have been *too effective* and have driven Italy to desperation. Three days before the meeting of the Committee of Eighteen on November 29 which was due to impose oil sanctions, Roosevelt gave a public intimation of American readiness to co-operate and warned the American oil exporters to be ready to cut down supplies ; it was only then that the meeting of November 29 was cancelled at the last moment, and this sudden postponement spiked Roosevelt's preparations and gave the upper hand to the oil exporters. " The League Powers have double-crossed us as usual," wrote the *New York Post*. Hoare's own speech is the best answer to Baldwin's shameless post-mortem attempt to throw the blame on the United States.

SO much for the misleading American alibi. There remains only the real gist of Baldwin's argument, that, because Germany and Japan are out of the League, therefore the League cannot take effective action for peace. Look at this argument and consider what it means. Germany and Japan

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openly go out of the League in order to pursue their war-making policies and because they find the League a hindrance to their unconcealed war aims. Baldwin immediately announces: Now of course the League cannot act, since Germany and Japan are outside. In other words, the moment that a situation arises for which the League was supposed to have been created, namely that a Power resorts to war and it falls upon the combination of other Powers to make their stand for peace, Baldwin declares that any further action is impossible without the co-operation of the war-making Power. Is not this the very rôle of an "inside man," acting from within the League, as an accomplice of the same burglar gang that has passed out? The British support of Nazi Germany is the key to the international situation, which has paralysed the League, made possible the Italian attack on Abyssinia, driven France into the arms of Italy, and thus also paralysed the action of the League when Britain, after consistently sabotaging the League, suddenly wanted to use it as a private instrument for its own purposes in relation to Italy.

IS it then correct, as the National Government now argues, that a collective stand for peace is now impossible, since Germany and Japan stand outside, *i.e.*, are bent on war, and that the only course is therefore capitulation to the fascist war offensive, the tearful appeal to Hitler and "God grant" he may be merciful. It is only necessary to consider the significance of such a snivelling display of helpless innocence and trustfulness in the mouth of the leader of the most hard-faced gang of the singularly hard-boiled British Imperialism to see that here is only the hypocritical cover for the *deliberate choice* of unity with Hitler against the line of collective security for Europe as a whole in unity with France, the Soviet Union and the smaller States which stand for peace. The fascist war offensive is by no means invincible. The balance of strength does not rest with the fascist States, which, as the challenging revisionist States, are still in the weaker position in the balance of world power, are economically and financially extremely

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weak, and are internally unstable. A united stand of Britain, France and the Soviet Union, with Britain adhering to the Franco-Soviet Pact or adopting a similar Anglo-Soviet Pact, or even adhering to a European Peace Plan on the lines of the French proposal, could bar the way to the fascist war offensive in Europe, as it could have made impossible the Italian offensive in Abyssinia. But the aims of the ruling forces of British Imperialism, represented by Baldwin, still move in other directions.

WHAT are the aims of British Imperialism? British policy still works for the dangerous line of the British-French-German alliance on the lines of the "new Locarno" offered by Germany, to draw Germany back into a "reformed" *i.e.*, emasculated, League, to seek in this way to neutralise the effect of the Franco-Soviet Pact and to give Germany a free hand in Eastern Europe. This is the essence of the Hitler Plan of April 1st, which has been received with such a loving welcome from the British official press. This is the significance of the British-French military conversations which seek to force Nazi expansion to other directions. Listen to the semi-official organ of the National Government's foreign policy, MacDonald's *News-Letter*:

> It is not an immediate necessity for our defence to maintain the status quo in Eastern Europe, and we must safeguard ourselves from being drawn into war owing to France's connection with Germany's Eastern neighbours. (*The News-Letter*, March 27, 1936).

The line is repeated in Garvin's article "No Eastern Entanglements":

> Our third rock-bottom principle must be that we refuse absolutely to be committed in advance to any kind of intervention in the unsettled questions of Eastern and Central Europe. We do not prejudge any question in those quarters. . . . No entanglement in an anti-German sense of British policy in Eastern Europe. (*Observer*, March 29, 1936).

The same line is given by "Scrutator" in the *Sunday Times*:

> What we want to secure is a Triple Entente between ourselves, France and Germany. . . . France is incapable of believing in Herr Hitler's sincere desire for peace even on the West, and what is with

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> us a confirmation of his sincerity on the West, namely that his ambitions are in the East, is to her Foreign Office an aggravation of the offence. (*Sunday Times*, March 29, 1936).

The basic line is given bluntly, as usual, and without polite concealments by the *Daily Mail :*

> The *Daily Mail* has for years urged the desirability of a definite alliance with France. But it was to be of a type which was not directed against Germany—an alliance to protect the integrity of French territory in Western Europe, clear of all entanglements in the East, and leaving Germany a free hand there against Bolshevism. (*Daily Mail*, April 1, 1936).

THE Hitler Plan, which is the expression of this line and was no doubt prepared after consultation with British emissaries, just as the Rhineland coup followed the Londonderry visit, is the most unmistakable war-plan which was ever yet attempted to be put forward as a "peace offer." Security is solemnly offered in the West in order to be refused on the South and in the East. Why? Non-aggression pacts are recognised as not good enough for Britain and France. But non-aggression pacts are regarded as the very thing for Austria, Czecho-Slovakia and Lithuania. Why the distinction? If non-aggression pacts are regarded as a sufficient guarantee of peace for Southern and Eastern Europeans, what need of special guarantees of mutual assistance in the West? If, on the contrary, all promises of peace and non-aggression in the West are regarded as empty paper without binding obligations of mutual assistance, why does the same logic lose its validity east of the Rhine? There is no escaping the conclusion to which this Plan points as clearly as a Nazi dagger. The binding guarantees are necessary in the West in order to paralyse France from coming to the aid of the other nations in Europe or fulfilling the Franco-Soviet Pact; the bilateral non-aggression pacts are suitable in the South and East in order to immobilise these States from any common defence, while the Nazi dictatorship may devour each victim at leisure. There never was a more glaringly obvious strategic General Staff plan for future war, dished up for the consumption of the innocent British public as a "peace plan." The Hitler War Plan is a Nazi

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dagger pointed directly at the heart of every people east of the Rhine, but therefore also at all Europe and the peace of the world ; and some of the leaders of British Imperialism outside the National Government are beginning to realise that the point of that dagger must eventually be turned, if the first stage succeeds, of necessity against the British Empire (just this dilemma and conflict of policy within British Imperialism affords the opportunity for the peace forces, if they only get their line clear, to defeat the pro-fascist war forces).

AND now turn to the fawning reception to the Hitler War Plan by the British official press, Conservative, Liberal—and Labour :

> Little, if anything, in this long-range peace prospectus is impracticable, and all of it answers to the deep longing of peoples. . . . It is attainable and must be attained. (*Times*, April 2, 1936).
>
> Would it not be possible for France and Belgium to regard these offers as concrete concessions, and then to consider whether they should not promise reciprocal action on their side ? (*Manchester Guardian*, April 2, 1936).
>
> The first reaction to the German reply is one of overwhelming relief. . . . One can but say that only a Europe doomed by its own stupidity can fail to make something of this opportunity. (*Daily Herald*, April 2, 1936).

This follows up the similar reception to the original Nazi remilitarisation of the Rhineland. " A Chance to Rebuild " was the title of the *Times* editorial on March 9th. " Seize the Chance " was the almost identical title of the *Daily Herald* editorial the same day. " I regard this trouble as a great opportunity," was the verdict of the familiar mouthpiece of British foreign policy, General Smuts ; " I shall not be surprised if this will lead to a great peace settlement for the world . . . the German Government has made far-reaching proposals for the peace of the world " (*Times*, March 23, 1936).

IT is not surprising that the Hitler war offensive, as the whole fascist war offensive, should have the support of the most reactionary elements of British Imperialism, as of the similar elements in France. But it is serious that, whereas in

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France the mass front, the united working class front and the People's Front, fights on a clear line against the fascist war offensive and the pro-fascist elements represented by Laval and Tardieu, in Britain there should be division and cross-purposes among the forces supporting peace and even in the Labour movement. There are still pro-Hitler (and in the extreme cases even "Hands Off Mussolini") influences cutting across a firm front and assisting the Conservative and fascist campaign, accepting Hitler's "peace" offers at face value, urging co-operation with Hitler, attacking the Franco-Soviet fight for peace, bringing out the familiar arguments—which in the present concrete situation are pro-fascist and pro-war in significance—against the injustices of Versailles, the evils of the status quo or the grievances of the "Have-Not" Powers, or justifying the Nazi remilitarisation of the Rhineland. ("In the conscience of the British people the prohibition which has been violated is itself inequitable"—*Daily Herald*, March 13, 1936; "despite our intense hatred of Hitlerism and the fascist régime, no socialist who realises these facts can place all the blame upon the German Government"—*New Leader*, March 13, 1936). These forces appear both on the extreme right of the Labour movement, combined with the fight against the united front, or among elements of the left in a "socialist" dress of expressions of indifference to the issues of war between fascism and its victims, or attacks on the menace of war as arising, not from the fascist war offensive and its supporters in every imperialist camp, but from the endeavours to build a peace front against it.

THIS situation is essential to be cleared in Britain. For these elements, whether misled by honest confusion in a difficult situation requiring strong and living revolutionary Marxist analysis in place of empty formulas, or whether directed, as in the case of the *Daily Herald* foreign policy, by blind hostility to the united front and to the Soviet Union and close association with British Imperialism, inevitably become objectively part of the war front. Their arguments become identical with those of fascism or openly applauded by the

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fascist and pro-fascist elements. It is no accident that the Continental social democratic press (even German Social Democracy) has begun to attack the right wing of the Labour Party as the menace to peace and bulwark of Hitler; at the recent London Conference of the Labour Party representatives had occasion to learn something of the feeling in the other social democratic parties. It is no accident that the fascist *Daily Mail* praises Maxton for his foreign policy as " a socialist leader who is not afraid to speak the truth " (*Daily Mail*, April 8, 1936). This situation is not only a scandal that must be wiped out (the revolt of the membership at the I.L.P. Conference against the official leadership's indifference to the issue of Italy and Abyssinia is at least the beginning of a welcome sign, even though the official leadership, by threatening to resign, succeeded in rescinding this decision of the majority) ; it is a most serious weakness in the whole international fight for peace. Just as the policy of British Imperialism is the danger-point that lets down the building of an effective front for peace against the fascist war offensive, so the weakness of the peace front in Britain in directly exposing and fighting this pro-fascist policy of the National Government, and defeating the National Government, as the French mass front defeated Laval, weakens the fight on an international plane. The centre of this weakness is the opposition of the official leadership of the Labour Party to the united front ; this opposition, although now long in a minority in the Second International, continues by threats of splits to paralyse the will of the majority and bar the way to the international working-class united front. The international working-class united front is more essential now than ever in the present gathering war-crisis. The obstacles to it must be overcome. This fight, the fight against the imperialist support of the fascist war offensive, for the mass peace front, and for the international working-class front as the core of the mass peace front, centres to-day in Britain.

R. P. D.

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# PROBLEMS OF LABOUR POLICY

[*At the beginning of this year in view of the many issues arising out of the General Election in relation to the future of Labour policy the* LABOUR MONTHLY *decided to invite Labour M.P.s., Labour Candidates and others active in the Labour Movement to contribute their views with especial reference to last December Notes of the Month by R.P.D. entitled "After the Election," and the article by W. Rust, "The Future of the Labour Party" in the January issue. The following contribution continues this Discussion, following on R.P.D.'s Notes last month*].

By GEORGE HICKS, M.P.

I.

THERE is need for working-class unity. There is need for a united People's Front against Fascism and War.

It would be stupid not to affirm the need for the strongest unity between all active, sincere workers in the Labour Movement, especially between all understanding Socialists.

There is, indeed, need for the complete class unity of all who belong to the working class, men and women, and the youth of both sexes.

Yet our dialectic teaches us that this very desirable and very essential unity, so imperatively required in present circumstances, is very difficult of accomplishment.

Real unity is not a question of formal agreements and alliances between groups or parties. It goes deeper than that. And close organisation is a basic requisite. No real unity is conceivable with unorganised workers. Also common, united thought and feeling is required to result in common, united policy and action.

It is here that difficulties arise in every direction. The impact of capitalist conditions, and the ever-changing character of those conditions on the working class, turns the Labour Movement into an immense arena of divergent views, clashing policies, endless discussion and intellectual turmoil. Inevitably so. And, while we all no doubt, (certainly those of us who are understanding Socialists), feel desperately the need for unity—both in organisation and ideas—on the part of the working class —that is, the most effective integration of the working class as a vital force—the very conditions are continuously breeding fresh needs, desires

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and urges amongst them that insist upon expression in new ideas, new policies, etc., that produce all manner of disintegrating factors.

All the time we are beset by a paradoxical state of affairs. The unity that we so ardently strive for has a knack of largely dissolving under the pressure of changing circumstances. The whole history of the Labour Movement is a history of integrations and disintegrations.

Now, more than ever, must we realise that. Realisation will help us to a greater positive achievement of unity. It will enable us to do much to extirpate from our midst many of the unessential causes of disunity: bickerings, personal abuse, the desire, every five minutes, to march off and form a new Trade Union or a new political Party, and so on. It will induce us to reach out for the largest amount of organised strength and power, and the largest measure of common agreement. It will enable us to appreciate the immense value of the right to the fullest and freest discussion in the Labour Movement, and how imperative it is to preserve the democracy of our organisations. And it will compel a self-restraint, a training and discipline within the Labour Movement which, in these times, is so absolutely necessary if we are to present an unbreakable front to Fascism and to overcome the danger of war.

## II.

The symposium which has appeared in the LABOUR MONTHLY in regard to the problems of Labour policy began with a review of the results of the General Election of last November, and Labour policy at that time. Since then changes of major significance have taken place.

We live in a world dynamic in every respect. Everything—economic, social and political—is in a molten, a fluid condition.

All things are flowing rapidly. The situation to-day is different from what it was yesterday; considerably different from what it was a few weeks ago; vastly different from what it was at the time of the General Election. To-morrow it will be different from what it is to-day; a few weeks hence considerably different; six months hence vastly different. The one certain thing is the all-prevailing uncertainty. The situation, at the given moment, is the sum of millions of varying, largely conflicting factors, produced by the onward sweep of the economic, social and political forces.

Capitalism, in decline and desperation, the prey of its own frightful contradictions and chaos, creates this volcanic forward movement of events—this kaleidoscopic, ever-changing situation.

The restless, labyrinthine, manœuvrings of international capitalist diplomacy; the rushing backwards and forwards of politicians and statesmen to Geneva and the capitals of Europe; the frantic scrambling

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for fresh alliances and new alignments between the various countries ; the psychological war of hopes and fears which is being fought out, with mounting tempo, by the governments and publicists of capitalism—are all indicative of the seething conditions underneath.

From out of this turmoil two dominating elements emerge, expressive of the class struggle which rends capitalist society : the drive towards Fascism and War ; the drive towards Socialism.

Fascism, as we well know now, is the last desperate endeavour of capitalism to preserve itself ; to retain its grip on and control of the means of wealth production, and economic, social and political life generally. Capitalism in this country is as liable to be driven along the path of Fascism as in any other country.

War, the outcome of the economic warfare that capitalism is compelled, inexorably to pursue, might, in present conditions, be regarded as the fine flower of capitalism in its Fascist phase.

Wherever we look in the capitalist world we see society undergoing paroxysms towards Fascism and War, and, largely underneath, with the exception of the U.S.S.R., towards Socialism.

Readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY are sufficiently acquainted with affairs and the progress of events to realise that.

The industrial crises and unemployment ; the tragic poverty and wretchedness of the working class throughout the entire capitalist world ; the internal disorders of the various countries, seen and unseen, open and suppressed ; the agonising outworking of Fascism in Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland, and so on, with its hideous exploitation and enslavement of the workers, its Jew-baiting and religious persecution, its prisons, torture chambers, concentration camps, its hounding into exile of countless thousands, its general mediæval barbarism, and its militarisation of the entire peoples ; the massing of the workers against Fascism in the countries that still retain democracy ; the intensive general rearmament of all the leading countries ; the bubbling cauldron of European politics and the rapid succession of war measures : the re-militarisation of the Rhine, Austrian Conscription, Turkish demand for the fortification of the Dardanelles, British, French and Belgian staff talks and preparations, etc., etc. ; the further Japanese penetration into Mongolia and China, and the increasing antagonism between Japan and the U.S.S.R. ; the ghastly Italian bomb and poison gas campaign in Abyssinia—are all, inter-related, symptoms of capitalism in convulsions, indicating the relentless drive—urge—on the one hand to Fascism and world war ; on the other to Socialism.

Every day these fundamental urges are becoming clearer.

Whatever changes there may be in the situation, and we may rest assured that they will be many, these two fundamentally antagonistic

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" drives " or " urges " will continue, in my opinion, in this country and in the world—with alterations in the relations of forces and with increasing momentum, until a solution is reached. What can be that solution? That solution can only be a universal, catastrophic war, signalising, in effect, the doom of humanity—or Socialism.

III.

Part of our difficulty in appraising the chameleon-like situation is to get at the facts beneath the surface.

As the last great war proved, in the shadow of modern war there is social revolution. Any modern war causes such a drain on material resources and occasions such stresses and sufferings that its inevitable aftermath is social revolution.

Bearing this in mind, we can have very little doubt as to what " Peace " will bring in Italy when the Abyssinian War has burnt itself out. And a social revolution in Italy, occasioning the collapse of Fascism there, with intimate actions and reactions on Austria, France and Germany, and general repercussions on Europe and the world, will produce what? The sands of Italian Fascism are running out, and with their passing will occur a drain, also, on the substance of German Fascism. Hitler, who strikes from out of the night, must realise that the time at his disposal is growing short. The more discerning statesmen of capitalism must also be conscious of that. Mr. Baldwin, some time ago, said something to the effect that " It is not our purpose to destroy Fascism." Of course not. He was speaking on behalf of the British Government. Capitalism is in desperate straits to maintain its Fascist dykes against the tide of Socialism. . . . . Yet these very dykes are used as fortresses against each other. . . . .

IV.

Now, in the prevailing circumstances, so fraught with danger, so pregnant with possible enormous favourable developments, what are the problems of Labour policy?

We write here of the problems relating to the Labour Movement of this country, the British sector of the international working-class front.

The outstanding problem, in my opinion, is that of gathering the maximum strength—Power—in the Labour Movement itself.

We need that Power to meet all contingencies and to perform the mighty tasks confronting us.

Clearly, the basic problems of Labour policy are those relating to the development of such power of organisation and conscious understanding in the Labour Movement as to enable it:

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(*a*) To defend the workers—the people—against the miseries and oppressions which capitalism in convulsions is heaping upon them and to safeguard them against Fascism and War.

(*b*) To lift the working class of this country from out of its national insularity and bring it into closer and closer relationship with the working class of other countries, so as to enable it the more effectively to play its part in the world struggle against Fascism and War, against capitalism and for world Socialism.

(*c*) To establish such intensive organisation and to carry on such intensive education amongst the workers as will enable them speedily to respond, in thought and action, to decisive changes in the situation.

(*d*) This, as but a part of the great task of preparing the workers, organisationally, mentally and morally, for Socialism ; and

(*e*) To move steadily, consistently forward, with growing strength and increasing consciousness of purpose, amidst the rapidly changing conditions, dealing with each situation as it arises, winning positions with the Trade Unions in industry, with the Co-operatives in the consumers' realm, with the Labour Party in politics—to the conquest of Political Power : this, as an essential pre-requisite to overcoming capitalism and laying the foundations of Socialist economy.

## V.

The problems of Labour Policy are not confined to the problems of Labour Party Policy.

The verbal war of attrition which the Labour Party wages in Parliament and on the Municipal Councils, for reforms in legislation and administration, for concessions to the workers and improvements in their lot, has its counter-part in the ceaseless war of negotiations, occasionally emphasised by strikes, which the Trade Unions wage in industry. The Co-operative organisations also wage a war, in their special realm, against the capitalist trusts and combines.

The workers' struggle is a struggle of many facets—of many fronts—and the processes of that struggle have compelled the workers to call into being, and to build up and develop, their organisations and movements in industry and in the consumers' realm, as well as in politics. Moreover, the ideological aspect of the struggle has compelled these movements to develop their propagandist and educational work on a large scale and to foster the growth of specific working-class educational organisations like the N.C.L.C.

I mention this here because it is essential to the consideration of the problems of Labour policy for us now to be thinking of the Labour Movement as a single whole—Trade Union, Co-operative, Social and Political.



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We need to look over the whole field and appraise the Labour Movement like a General would appraise his army, its divisions, regiments and so on. Here, indeed, is the region in which the real problem of unity arises. How to get the closest operative unity between the divisions and regiments into which the organised workers are gathered in industry, in co-operation, as well as in politics—how to make all this organisation serve our purposes, act on our lines—that is the wider and deeper problem. And this especially in the towns and districts—the actual theatres of the struggle.

(It will be recognised that a formal working agreement between the Labour Party and Communist Party—be it sincere, and many have their doubts about that, doubts based upon experiences of the past fifteen years which lead them to suspect the policy of the Trojan Horse in the desire of the Communist Party—would be but a relatively small contribution to this wider and deeper unity).

As I said at the beginning, the need exists for the complete class unity of all who belong to the working class.

The first great step towards real unity is obviously the conscious unity of the existing working-class organisations—all phases and sections of the organised Labour Movement.

The progress of the Labour Movement in the capitalist environment existing in Britain, is pressing this question of class unity of organisation more and more upon the order of the day. Both the Trade Unions and Co-operatives are finding themselves hampered and restricted in their development and legitimate functioning by Parliamentary legislation and the powers of the State. The State—the Government with its immense machinery and power—occupies the centre of the field of struggle. It is the central fortress which must be won by the workers before further substantial advance is possible, in industry, in co-operation, as well as in politics.

## VI.

We have the National Council of Labour, and working arrangements between the Trade Unions, the Co-operatives and the Labour Party. There is a growing unity between the sections of the Labour Movement in the localities. But the needed organisational unity implies a much closer, more intimate, more united working co-operation, local and national, than now exists. The aim should be to unite and concentrate the existing Labour Movement to the utmost extent and to transform it into an immense recruiting agency for organising the entire working class within its fold and an immense educational agency for schooling the entire working class in Socialism.

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## VII.

Let me try to picture the position as I see it.

The purpose of the Labour Movement is the realisation of Socialism.

The realisation of Socialism is the historic mission of the working class. The other classes in society—the petty bourgeoisie, the middle and upper classes—are rooted to the capitalist system, their actual being depends upon the preservation of capitalism.

It is with the working class, then, that we have to deal. The working class as it now is, and not as some folk imagine it to be.

Here in Britain there is roughly a population of 45,000,000. Of that 40,000,000 belong to the working class. Forty millions of men, women and children who depend upon the sale of labour for a living, under capitalist conditions as we know them to exist in this country.

"Look at the working class. Study the working class. Live in a working-class environment, under working-class conditions. Saturate yourselves in the atmosphere of working-class life. Immerse yourselves in the work of the local Labour Movement. Canvass in working-class areas. Engage in the task of organising the workers in the Trade Unions, and of winning them for Socialism." How often have I wanted to tender this advice to those who imagine that one has only to write a convincing treatise to accomplish Socialism. Follow this advice, and then the problems of Labour policy will be made plain.

The workers live, precariously, amidst widespread poverty. They are harassed by such evils as unemployment and bad housing. They are the prey of intense exploitation. They are the heirs of generations of wage slavery, of humiliation to the upper classes. They are the heirs, also, of generations of struggle against that wage slavery and subjection. They are very intelligent, but they have been systematically kept ignorant by the ruling class. Their minds, their souls, are encrusted with acquired bigotries and prejudices, with conservatism, with humiliation, with snobbery—there is still much of the old bowing and scraping of the rural worker to the squire and parson tradition amongst them. They live in a degrading environment. They are surrounded by capitalist influences. Their minds are saturated every day with capitalist ideas by the press, pulpit, cinema, radio, etc. Despite the pressure of their economic conditions, despite the turmoil and struggle in which they are involved, despite their experiences in industrial and political strife, their world is largely a capitalist world. Their bodies are in wage-slavery, and their hearts and minds are pre-occupied with the "sport," the "interests," the ideas, which capitalism feeds out to them.

Within the working class of 40,000,000 men, women and children—in the physical, mental and moral conditions such as I have described—is the organised Labour Movement.

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What does it amount to? Only about 4,500,000 men and women belong to the Trade Unions. Seven million belong to the co-operative societies. Roughly about a million are really consciously within the political Labour Movement.

The working class is largely an immense number of unorganised individuals, helpless, powerless, the victims of forces about which they have the vaguest ideas, tacitly accepting their lot as something pre-ordained, easily shepherded along those paths which capitalism desires them to tread by the agencies the ruling class possess for the purpose.

It is from out of the working class, such as it is, that has to be called into being by and through the Labour Movement, an immeasurably developed Labour Movement—a Class Force, a Class Power, which will withstand Fascism, overcome the war danger, ensure the conquest of political power, and hammer the way to Socialism.

The problems of Labour policy are the problems of recruitment, organisation, and Socialist education.

The working class is a rich and inexhaustible field of recruitment for the Labour Movement. So it should be regarded and worked upon.

Preparatory to this the necessary changes should be effected in the Labour Movement itself. The concentration of its power and the reshaping of its constituent organisations into an immense recruiting machine, an immense training school for Socialism, and an immense instrument by and through which the workers can be enabled to think in working-class terms and to act, efficiently and boldly, on working-class lines. Every Trade Union branch, Trades Council (and Trades Council Federation), Co-operative Guild, Workmen's Club, local Labour Party, League of Youth, etc., can be a recruiting agency, a Socialist study circle, as well as an active functioning factor in the class struggle.

Our aim—the central aim of Labour policy—should be to so extend, strengthen and build up the Labour Movement as to actually embrace the whole of the working-class of this country. Every worker in industry, man or woman, boy or girl, should have a place in the ranks of the Trade Union Movement. One hundred per cent. Trades Unionism would mark a tremendous advance; would, in my opinion, provide such support for the other phases of the Labour Movement as to render it irresistible. Every working housewife should have a place in the ranks of the Co-operative Movement. All workers should be enrolled in the political working-class movement.

There are at least twenty millions of working people, of both sexes, who could and should be organised in the Labour Movement.

Given this, and all things else can be gathered unto us, and what is in our hearts and minds to do we can accomplish.

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# PROBLEMS OF TRADE UNIONISM IN 1936

## By ARTHUR HORNER

[*The following article by Arthur Horner, of the South Wales Miners' Federation, is intended to open a discussion on Trade Union Policy. The unions are growing rapidly, but there is lack of a progressive policy. How is this to be overcome? We must invite our readers to contribute their views on this in the discussion here opened by Comrade Horner.*]

THE year 1935 was outstanding in many respects for Trade Unionism in this country. An amazing recovery in morale was evident throughout the various sections. The recruitment of new members was definite evidence of the rising spirits of the workers.

The increasing activity shown in strikes and the ingenuity and daring displayed in new forms of struggle, such as the stay-down strikes, etc., all indicate the depth of the changed attitude of the workers. The most marked feature of the year was, however, the change from a general defensive position to a partial counter offensive.

From 1926 to 1935 even the unions connected with the most favourably fixed industries had not dared to demand better wages and conditions.

In 1935, even those connected with the most depressed industries launched in some cases, unprecedented demands, such as the Miners' claim to the 2s. per shift. It is regrettable that the settlement of the Miners' question was so unsatisfactory in content and form.

It is worthy of notice, however, that this was the first time since 1920, apart from 1924, when the question before the Miners from the beginning was "How much will we get?" For 15 years it had been the fight for the *status quo*, with the underlying question "How much will we lose?"

True, many of the demands made were for the restoration of the 1931 economy cuts, and cannot therefore be claimed to be more than the recovery of defined lost ground. Nevertheless, even these mark the change before referred to.

For the first time since unemployment attained mass dimensions, the organised employed showed organisational sympathy with the unemployed, as distinct from the previous customary loose sympathy. What has contributed very appreciably to this radical transformation is undoubtedly the growing spirit of unity in the unions themselves. The anti-communist prejudice which was so fashionable following the General

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Strike, has given way to a more honest readiness to work together to achieve immediate objectives.

It is probable that the slight trade improvement in certain industries will continue during 1936, due to the extraordinary war expenditure which has been planned. To provide the means to carry this programme through, steps will be undertaken to contract expenditure on social services, whilst the Protection policy of the Government is likely to be still more developed, and to result in a considerable increase in the cost of living. The Means Test, now being applied in insidious forms to individuals, will be extended in its application if the Government thinks it politic to do so at any favourable time.

### *Lessons from* 1935 *for* 1936

The limited character of the successes realised during last year can be reasonably attributed in the main to removable subjective deficiencies. They are in the following order of importance:

1. A hanging on to the practice of class collaboration by the upper strata of the Trade Union bureaucracy.
2. Consequent continued opposition to unity with militants, advocating progressive programmes and measures, on grounds of political differences in order to cover bankruptcy of Mondism as a policy in the present situation.
3. This opposition is expressed in the continued attempts to isolate militants by differentiating between their rights and the rights of ordinary members of the unions.
4. Failure to cement working-class unity in various undertakings by the formation of new, and the strengthening of existing, workshop organisation, regardless of membership of particular unions.
5. Lack of adaptability, or readiness to change previous forms of Trade Union organisation in face of rapid development of trustification in certain important industries.
6. Absence of a co-ordinated policy between various trade unions contemplating struggles to improve or defend conditions.
7. The slow progress made due to the lack of inclination in certain important quarters, in knitting the unemployed to the employed through definite organisation.

### *What to do Now*

It is essential that every honest worker shall become a member of a trade union, and that he shall function intelligently as a member of that union. This must be done in spite of all impediments, due to the absence

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of trade union democracy in certain unions. The reactionary part played by individual leaders cannot justify the failure of their critics to join the union. It is important that we understand the daily life of the union.

Great national agitations are not the whole life of the unions at any time. Every day problems have to be faced, to which solutions must be found from within existing facilities.

There is too much of a tendency to live in the future. Too many times militants escape facing a way out of a difficult situation to-day, by stating what could be done, if the law was changed or agreements were different to what they actually are. Of course, laws should be changed, and agreements be made more favourable for the workers, but this will only be achieved to the extent that militants gain the most out of what is, as a step towards winning what is vital—the confidence of the masses.

This implies careful study of every factor which helps to determine the wages and working conditions of the union members. On the basis of such daily work, and basing our future plans on the mass influence thus gained, we can go forward on equal terms with those who seek to contest progress for the radical changes which are so urgently necessary.

### *What are the Problems?*

Of great importance is the strengthening of the workshop basis of trade unionism. We are living in an era of rapid rationalisation. Without violating existing union agreements employers can often make such technical and administrative changes as involve speed-up and mass dismissals.

There is a feeling that such rationalisation cannot be resisted. On the contrary it is necessary that the union movement should be strengthened in the factories in order to resist it.

To-day in many factories the question of the fixing of piecework prices and bonus times is too often left to the individual workman and the representative of the management. This must be scrapped. If we are to combat rationalisation effectively every workshop question, the introduction of a new process, the fixing of piece prices, the general questions of factory welfare, must be a matter of collective bargaining, and this demands in the workshop strong shop stewards' committees. One of the most important questions before the union movement is precisely how the vital defences of trade unionism can be built up in the speediest and most efficient way.

In connection with the rationalisation drive, the question of reduced hours of labour is of vital importance. In the mining industry, the introduction of machine mining, for example, is not lessening but actually increasing the physical strain on the workers. The first Scottish report

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on the Depressed Areas showed how the development of machine mining was making the owners reluctant to employ the older men who could not stand the pace. In 1920 the average output per man employed was 14.54 cwts. In 1935 it was 23 cwts.

The recent report of the Commissioner for the Depressed Areas in England and Wales states:

> Some indication of the general trend of development is given by the fact that the output of coal for the week ending December, 1934, was 5,036,600 tons with 770,000 persons unemployed, while in the week ending December 14, 1935, was 5,159,000 tons, with 755,200 persons employed, an increase of output of 122,900 tons of coal, with a decrease of 14,800 workers.

In January, 1924, the workers in the pig iron industry produced 25 tons per month per man employed. To-day it has jumped to 41 tons.

It is clear that there can be no substantial reduction of unemployment without the reduction of the hours of labour. How can the movement best be organised to obtain this?

1936 confronts us with many unsatisfied demands. The miners are far from content with the recent settlement, and it is certain that the efforts will be renewed this year in a much sharper form than before.

The Railwaymen, Engineers, and various other sections are still in the stage of argument *re* wage increases.

One of the most important questions before the working-class movement is how the unions which have demands for wage increases can exert their united strength in favour of their demands.

How can the workers force their executives to unite and launch a great campaign popularising the wages demands and recruiting for the unions.

What can be done to force the General Council of the T.U.C. to call the union executives together to discuss united action.

We are in the midst of a drive for improved conditions—which in the nature of capitalism cannot endure. The workers are streaming into the unions demanding action. The union leaders are temporising and missing the golden opportunity.

How can we overcome this? How can the progressive branches and shop stewards in a given union and industry co-operate together on the basis of a real progressive policy. The Aircraft Shop Stewards and the movement amongst the London busmen are two examples of how the progressive forces within the unions can unite on the basis of a common policy, aiming at the development of a more effective union movement. The combine committees in the mining industry can develop into a similar movement. But what of the other unions?

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Then there is the whole question of war industry. We know how the engineering industry was swelled to abnormal proportions in the last war, and then how the surplus of labour was used to depress wages after the war was over. We know that engineering has had a big surplus of labour in good years and bad ever since. The question of how the workers are to defend their conditions is here of paramount importance.

And then there is the problem of organisation in the newer industries. In the last few years a great new furniture industry has been developed in rationalised factories outside the orbit of trade unionism. Here is a new and a pressing problem for the unions in the furnishing trades.

The great new motor industry—which in the light car industry is almost completely unorganised is another problem. High wages on the basis of speed-up in the boom season. Unemployment the rest of the year. This means a low annual wage. Here the question of the guaranteed week is all important.

But how are these new sections of industry to be organised. By the isolated drive of individual unions or by a concerted drive of the whole movement. Only the latter contains the promise of speedy results.

Finally, the honest and repeated gestures in favour of International Trade Union Unity from revolutionary circles, and which are so actively sabotaged particularly by the British section of Amsterdam must be pushed forward in this country.

The shame which is ours in Great Britain, in that we tolerate the part played by Citrine and others, who are deliberately preventing the forces coming together in face of Fascism and War—this must be washed out in active emulation of our French comrades who have undoubtedly saved France from the havoc of Fascism.

International Trade Union Unity ! Let 1936 mark the revival of what has been lost since 1926, when our comrades in the U.S.S.R. gave the greatest practical demonstration in history of International solidarity, and when they contributed 1¼ million pounds to save the British miners from starvation.

The prospects for 1936 are good. The fallacy of Mondism has been burned into our minds and bodies by the suffering it has caused. The workers are ready to face the only alternative path of scientific working-class struggle for Food, Peace and Freedom.

The victorious workers of factory, mine and field in the U.S.S.R. wave us on through the tortuous and difficult path that lies before us. 1936 can take us a long way forward if we tackle the jobs under our noses whilst keeping firm eyes on our ultimate goal of a Free Soviet Britain.

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# PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

## By JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

[*The Presidential Address of Jawaharlal Nehru to the Indian National Congress which has just concluded its sessions at Lucknow in April has aroused considerable discussion, and is likely to mark an important stage in the development of the Indian national movement. We print below the full text of the most important sections. Reasons of space have compelled the omission of a number of sections, including passages of considerable interest on the Indian States and on the communal question.*

*After a personal introduction, which is here omitted, the speech begins with a survey of the position of the Indian national struggle in the world situation.*]

SIXTEEN years ago we took a new and long step converting this Congress from an ineffective body, feebly functioning amongst the upper classes, into a powerful democratic organisation with its roots in the Indian soil and the vast masses who live on it. A handful of our old friends, representing an age and a class which had had its day, left us, fearful of this democratic upsurge, and preferring the shelter and protection of British imperialism to joining hands with the new vital forces which convulsed the country and struggled for freedom. Historically, they lapsed into the past. But we heard the rumbling of those forces and, for the moment, lined up with them and played a not unworthy part in current history. We sensed the new spirit of mass release, of psychological escape from the cramping effects of long subjection ; we gloried in the breaking of the mental bonds that encompassed us. The exhilaration of being in tune with the masses and with world forces came upon us and the feeling that we were the agents of historic destiny.

### *The Indian National Struggle and the World Situation*

We were engrossed in our national struggle and the turn it took bore the powerful impress of our great leader and of our national genius. We

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were hardly conscious then of what was happening outside. And yet our struggle was but part of a far wider struggle for freedom, and the forces that moved us were moving millions of people all over the world and driving them into action. All Asia was astir from the Mediterranean to the Far East, from the Islamic West to the Buddhist East ; Africa responded to the new spirit ; Europe, broken up by the war, was struggling to find a new equilibrium. And right across a vast area in Europe and Asia, in the Soviet territories, a new conception of human freedom and social equality fought desperately against a host of enemies. There were great differences in the many aspects of this freedom struggle all over the world and we were misled by them and did not see the common background. Yet if we are to understand these varied phenomena, and derive a lesson from them for our own national struggle, we must try to see and understand the whole picture. And if we do so we cannot fail to observe an organic connection between them which endures through changing situations. If once we grasp this organic bond, the world situation becomes easier to understand and our own national problems take their proper places in the wider picture. We realise then that we cannot isolate India or the Indian problem from that of the rest of the world.

During the troubled aftermath of the Great War came revolutionary changes in Europe and Asia, and the intensification of the struggle for social freedom in Europe, and a new aggressive nationalism in the countries of Asia. There were ups and downs, and sometimes it appeared as if the revolutionary urge had exhausted itself and things were settling down. But economic and political conditions were such that there could be no settling down, the existing structure could no longer cope with these new conditions, and all its efforts to do so were vain and fruitless. Everywhere conflicts grew and a great depression overwhelmed the world and there was a progressive deterioration, everywhere except in the wide-flung Soviet territories of the U.S.S.R., where, in marked contrast with the rest of the world, astonishing progress was made in every direction. Two rival economic and political systems faced each other in the world and, though they tolerated each other for a while, there was an inherent antagonism between them, and they played for mastery on the stage of the world. One of them was the capitalist order which had inevitably developed into vast imperialisms, which, having swallowed the colonial world, were intent on eating each other up. Powerful still and fearful of war, which might endanger their possessions, yet they came into inevitable conflict with each other and prepared feverishly for war. They were quite unable to solve the problems that threatened them and helplessly they submitted to slow decay. The other was the new socialist order of the U.S.S.R. which went from progress to progress, though often at terrible cost, and where the problems of the capitalist world had ceased to exist.

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Capitalism, in its difficulties, took to fascism with all its brutal suppression of what western civilisation had apparently stood for ; it became, even in some of its homelands, what its imperialist counterpart had long been in the subject colonial countries. Fascism and imperialism thus stood out as the two faces of the new decaying capitalism, and though they varied in different countries according to national characteristics and economic and political conditions, they represented the same forces of reaction and supported each other, and at the same time came into conflict with each other, for such conflict was inherent in their very nature. Socialism in the west and the rising nationalisms of the eastern and other dependent countries opposed this combination of fascism and imperialism. Nationalism in the East, it must be remembered, was essentially different from the new and terribly narrow nationalism of fascist countries ; the former was the historical urge to freedom, the latter the last refuge of reaction.

Thus we see the world divided up into two vast groups to-day—the imperialist and fascist on one side, the socialist and nationalist on the other. There is some overlapping of the two and the line between them is difficult to draw, for there is mutual conflict between the fascist and imperialist Powers, and the nationalism of subject countries has sometimes a tendency to fascism. But the main division holds and if we keep it in mind, it will be easier for us to understand world conditions and our own place in them.

Where do we stand then, we who labour for a free India ? Inevitably we take our stand with the progressive forces of the world which are ranged against fascism and imperialism. We have to deal with one imperialism in particular, the oldest and the most far-reaching of the modern world, but powerful as it is, it is but one aspect of world-imperialism. And that is the final argument for Indian independence and for the severance of our connection with the British Empire. Between Indian nationalism, Indian freedom and British imperialism there can be no common ground, and if we remain within the imperialist fold, whatever our name or status, whatever outward semblance of political power we might have, we remain cribbed and confined and allied to and dominated by the reactionary forces and the great financial vested interests of the capitalist world. The exploitation of our masses will still continue and all the vital social problems that face us will remain unsolved. Even real political freedom will be out of our reach, much more so radical social changes.

### *Decay of British Imperialism*

With the development of this great struggle all over the world we have seen the progressive deterioration of many of the capitalist-imperialist.

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countries and an attempt at consolidation of the reactionary forces under fascism or Naziism or so-called "national" governments. In India the same process has been evident to us during these past years, and the stronger the nationalist movement has grown, the more have efforts been made by our imperialist rulers to break our ranks and to gather together under their banner the reactionary elements in the country.

Meanwhile the decay of British imperialism in India becomes ever more apparent. It cannot, by its very nature, solve our economic problems and rid us of our terrible poverty, which it has largely itself created. It subsists on a normal fare of the fiercest repression and a denial of civil and even personal liberty. It surrounds us with a wide network of spies and, among the pillars of its administration, are the tribe of informers and *agents provocateurs* and the like. Its services try to seek comfort for their obvious deterioration and incompetence by perpetually singing songs of mutual adulation. Argument gives place to the policeman's baton and soldier's bayonet and prison and detention camp, and even our extraordinary finances are justified by the methods of the bully.

A government that has to rely on the Criminal Law Amendment Act and similar laws, that suppresses the press and literature, that bans hundreds of organisations, that keeps people in prison without trial and that does so many other things that are happening in India to-day, is a government that has ceased to have even a shadow of a justification for its existence. I can never adjust myself to these conditions, I find them intolerable. And yet I find many of my own countrymen complacent about them, some even supporting them, some, who have made the practice of sitting on a fence into a fine art, being neutral when such questions are discussed. And I have wondered what there was in common between them and me and those who think like I do. We in the Congress welcome all co-operation in the struggle for Indian freedom; our doors are ever open to all who stand for that freedom and are against imperialism. But they are not open to the allies of imperialism and the supporters of repression and those who stand by the British Government in its suppression of civil liberty. We belong to opposite camps.

### *The National Congress and the Masses*

That is one side of the picture. What of us? I have found a spirit of disunion spreading over the land, a strange *malaise*, and petty conflicts amongst old comrades growing ever bigger and interfering with all activity. We have forgotten for the moment the larger ideals we stood for and we quarrel over petty issues. We have largely lost touch with the masses and, deprived of the life-giving energy that flows from them, we dry up and weaken and our organisation shrinks and loses the power it had.

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Our direct action struggles in the past were based on the masses, and especially the peasantry, but the backbone and leadership were always supplied by the middle classes, and this, under the circumstances, was inevitable. The middle classes are a vague group or groups ; at the top, a handful of them are closely allied to British imperialism ; at the bottom are the dispossessed and other groups who have been progressively crushed by economic circumstances and out of whose ranks come the advanced political workers and revolutionaries ; in between are the centre groups, which tend often to side with the advanced elements, but which also have alliances with the upper groups and live in the hope of joining their superior ranks. A middle class leadership is thus often a distracted leadership, looking in two directions at the same time. In times of crisis and struggle, when unity of aim and activity is essential, this two-faced leadership is bound to injure the cause and to hold back when a forward move is called for. Being too much tied up with property and the goods of this world, it is fearful of losing them, and it is easier to bring pressure on it and to exhaust its stamina. And yet, paradoxically, it is only from the middle class intellectuals that revolutionary leadership comes, and we in India know that our bravest leaders and our stoutest comrades have come from the ranks of the middle classes. But by the very nature of our struggle, these front-rank leaders are taken away and the others who take their place tire and are influenced more by the static element of their class. That has been very evident during our recent struggle when our propertied classes were hit hard by the Government's drastic policy of seizure and confiscation of monies and properties, and were thus induced to bring pressure for the suspension of the struggle.

How is this problem to be solved then ? Inevitably, we must have middle class leadership, but this must look more and more towards the masses and draw strength and inspiration from them. The Congress must be not only *for* the masses, as it claims to be, but *of* the masses ; only then will it really be for the masses. I have a feeling that our relative weakness to-day is due to a certain decay of our middle class elements and our divorce from the people at large. Our policies and ideas are governed far more by this middle class outlook than by a consideration of the needs of the great majority of the population. Even the problems that trouble us are essentially middle class problems, like the communal problem, which have no significance for the masses.

This is partly due, I think, to a certain historical growth during the last fifteen years to which we have failed to adapt ourselves, to a growing urgency of economic problems affecting the masses, and to a rising mass consciousness which does not find sufficient outlet through the Congress. This was not so in 1920 and later when there was an organic link between Congress and the masses, and their needs and desires, vague as they were,

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found expression in the Congress. But as those needs and desires have taken more definite shape, they have not been so welcome to other elements in the Congress and that organic connection has gone. That, though regrettable, is really a sign of growth and, instead of lamenting it, we must find a new link and a new connection on a fresh basis which allows for growth of mass consciousness within the Congress. The middle class claim to represent the masses had some justification in 1920 ; it has much less to-day, though the lower middle classes have still a great deal in common with the masses.

Partly also our divorce from the people at large is due to a certain narrowness of our Congress constitution. The radical changes made in it fifteen years ago brought it in line with existing conditions then and it drew in large numbers and became an effective instrument of national activity. Though the control and background were essentially middle-class and city, it reached the remotest village and brought with it political and economic consciousness to the masses and there was widespread discussion of national issues in city and village alike. One could feel the new life pulsating through this vast land of ours and, as we were in harmony with it, we drew strength from it. The intense repression by the Government during later years broke many of our physical and outward bonds with our countryside. But something more than that happened. The vague appeal of earlier days no longer sufficed, and on the new economic issues that were forcing themselves on us, we hesitated to give a definite opinion. Worse even than the physical divorce, there was a mental divorce between the middle class elements and the mass elements. Our constitution no longer fitted in with changing conditions ; it lost its roots in the soil and became a matter of small committees functioning in the air. It still had the mighty prestige of the Congress name behind it and this carried it a long way, but it had lost the living democratic touch. It became a prey to authoritarianism and a battleground for rival cliques fighting for control, and, in doing so, stooping to the lowest and most objectionable of tactics. Idealism disappeared and in its place there came opportunism and corruption. The constitutional structure of the Congress was unequal to facing the new situation ; it could be shaken up anywhere almost by a handful of unscrupulous individuals. Only a broad democratic basis could have saved it and this was lacking.

Last year an attempt was made to revise the constitution in order to get rid of some of these evils. How far that attempt has succeeded or not I am not competent to judge. Perhaps it has made the organisation more efficient but efficiency means little if it has no strength behind it, and strength, for us, can only come from the masses. The present constitution stresses still further the authoritarian side of the organisation, and in spite of stressing rural representation does not provide effective links with the masses.

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The real problem for us is, how in our struggle for independence we can join together all the anti-imperialist forces in the country, how we can make a broad front of our mass elements with the great majority of the middle classes which stands for independence. There has been some talk of a joint front, but so far as I can gather, this refers to some alliance among the upper classes, probably at the expense of the masses. That surely can never be the idea of the Congress and if it favours it, it betrays the interests it has claimed to represent, and loses the very reason for its existence. The essence of a joint popular front must be uncompromising opposition to imperialism, and the strength of it must inevitably come from the active participation of the peasantry and workers.

Perhaps you have wondered at the way I have dealt at some length with the background of international and national affairs and not touched so far the immediate problems that fill your minds. You may have grown impatient. But I am convinced that the only right way of looking at our own problems is to see them in their proper place in a world-setting. I am convinced that there is intimate connection between world events, and our national problem is but a part of the world problem of capitalist-imperialism.

### *The Aim of Socialism*

I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems lies in socialism, and when I use this word I do so not in a vague humanitarian way but in the scientific, economic sense. Socialism is, however, something even more than an economic doctrine ; it is a philosophy of life and as such also it appeals to me. I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism. That involves vast and revolutionary changes in our political and social structure, the ending of vested interests in land and industry, as well as the feudal and autocratic Indian States system. That means the ending of private property, except in a restricted sense, and the replacement of the present profit system by a higher ideal of co-operative service. It means ultimately a change in our instincts and habits and desires. In short, it means a new civilisation, radically different from the present capitalist order. Some glimpse we can have of this new civilisation in the territories of the U.S.S.R. Much has happened there which has pained me greatly and with which I disagree, but I look upon that great and fascinating unfolding of a new order and a new civilization as the most promising feature of our dismal age. If the future is full of hope it is largely because of Soviet Russia and what it has done, and I am convinced that, if some world catastrophe does not intervene, this new civilisation will spread to other lands and put an end to the wars and conflicts which capitalism feeds.

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I do not know how or when this new order will come to India. I imagine that every country will fashion it after its own way and fit it in with its national genius. But the essential basis of that order must remain and be a link in the world order that will emerge out of the present chaos.

Socialism is thus for me not merely an economic doctrine which I favour; it is a vital creed which I hold with all my head and heart. I work for Indian independence because the nationalist in me cannot tolerate alien domination ; I work for it even more because for me it is the inevitable step to social and economic change. I should like the Congress to become a socialist organisation and to join hands with the other forces in the world who are working for the new civilisation. But I realise that the majority in the Congress, as it is constituted to-day, may not be prepared to go thus far. We are a nationalist organisation and we think and work on the nationalist plane. It is evident enough now that this is too narrow even for the limited objective of political independence, and so we talk of the masses and their economic needs. But still most of us hesitate, because of our nationalist backgrounds, to take a step which might frighten away some vested interests. Most of those interests are already ranged against us and we can expect little from them except opposition even in the political struggle.

Much as I wish for the advancement of socialism in this country, I have no desire to force the issue in the Congress and thereby create difficulties in the way of our struggle for independence. I shall co-operate gladly and with all the strength in me with all those who work for independence even though they do not agree with the socialist solution. But I shall do so stating my position frankly and hoping in course of time to convert the Congress and the country to it, for only thus can I see it achieving independence. It should surely be possible for all of us who believe in independence to join our ranks together even though we might differ on the social issue. The Congress has been in the past a broad front representing various opinions joined together by that common bond. It must continue as such even though the difference of those opinions becomes more marked.

### *The Fight Against the Government of India Act*

I come now to a question which is probably occupying your minds—the new Act passed by the British Parliament and our policy in regard to it. This Act has come into being since the last Congress met, but even at that time we had had a foretaste of it in the shape of the White Paper, and I know of no abler analysis of those provisions than that contained in the presidential address of my predecessor in this high office. The Congress rejected that proposed constitution and resolved to have nothing to do with it. The new Act, as is well known, is an even more



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retrograde measure and has been condemned by even the most moderate and cautious of our politicians. If we rejected the White Paper, what then are we to do with this new charter of slavery to strengthen the bonds of imperialist domination and to intensify the exploitation of our masses? And even if we forget its content for a while, can we forget the insult and injury that have accompanied it, the contemptuous defiance of our wishes, the suppression of civil liberties and the widespread repression that has been our normal lot? If they had offered to us the crown of heaven with this accompaniment and with dishonour, would we not have spurned it as inconsistent with our national honour and self-respect? What then of this?

A charter of slavery is no law for the slave, and though we may perforce submit for a while to it and to the humiliation of ordinances and the like, inherent in that enforced submission is the right and the desire to rebel against it and to end it. . . . To this Act our attitude can only be one of uncompromising hostility and a constant endeavour to end it. How can we do this?

I think that, under the circumstances, we have no choice but to contest the election to the new provincial legislatures, in the event of their taking place. We should seek election on the basis of a detailed political and economic programme, with our demand for a Constituent Assembly in the fore-front. I am convinced that the only solution of our political and communal problems will come through such an Assembly, provided it is elected on an adult franchise and a mass basis. That Assembly will not come into existence till at least a semi-revolutionary situation has been created in this country and the actual relationships of power, apart from paper constitutions, are such that the people of India can make their will felt. When that will happen I cannot say, but the world is too much in the grip of dynamic forces to-day to admit of static conditions in India or elsewhere for long. We may thus have to face this issue sooner than we might expect. But obviously, a Constituent Assembly will not come through the new Act or the new legislatures. Yet we must press this demand and keep it before our country and the world, so that when the time comes we may be ripe for it. A Constituent Assembly is the only proper and democratic method for the framing of our constitution, and for its delegates then to negotiate a treaty with the representatives of the British Government.

One of the principal reasons for our seeking election will be to carry the message of the Congress to the millions of voters and to the scores of millions of the disfranchised, to acquaint them with our future programme and policy, to make the masses realise that we not only stand for them but that we are of them and seek to co-operate with them in removing their social and economic burdens. Our appeal and message

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will not be limited to the voters, for we must remember that hundreds of millions are disfranchised and they need our help most for they are at the bottom of the social ladder and suffer most from exploitation. We have seen in the past widespread official interference in the elections; we shall have to face that, as well as the serried and monied ranks of the reactionaries. But the real danger will come from our toning down our programme and policy in order to win over the hesitating and compromising groups and individuals. If we compromise on principles, we shall fall between two stools and deserve our fall. The only right way and the only safe way is to stand four-square on our own programme and to compromise with no one who has opposed the national struggle for freedom in the past, or who is in any way giving support to British imperialism.

When we have survived the election, what then are we to do? Office or no office? A secondary matter perhaps, and yet behind that issue lie deep questions of principle and vital differences of outlook, and a decision on that, either way, has far-reaching consequences. Behind it lies, somewhat hidden, the question of independence itself and whether we seek revolutionary changes in India or are working for petty reforms under the ægis of British imperialism. We go back again in thought to the clash of ideas which preceded the changes in the Congress in 1920. We made a choice then deliberately and with determination and discarded the old sterile creed of reformism. Are we to go back again to that blind and suffocating lane, after all these years of brave endeavour, and to wipe out the memory of what we have done and achieved and suffered? That is the issue and let none of us forget it when we have to give our decision.

How has this question arisen? If we express our hostility to the Act and reject the entire scheme, does it not follow logically that we should have nothing to do with the working of it and should prevent its functioning, in so far as we can? To accept office and ministry, under the conditions of the Act, is to negative our rejection of it and to stand self-condemned. National honour and self-respect cannot accept this position, for it would inevitably mean our co-operation in some measure with the repressive apparatus of imperialism, and we would become partners in this repression and in the exploitation of our people. Of course we would try to champion the rights of the people and would protest against repression, but as ministers under the Act we could do very little to give relief, and we would have to share responsibility for the administration with the apparatus of imperialism, for the deficit budgets, for the suppression of labour and the peasantry. It is always dangerous to assume responsibility without power, even in democratic countries; it will be far worse with this undemocratic constitution, hedged in with safeguards and reserved powers and mortgaged funds, where we have to follow the rules and regulations of our opponents' making. Imperialism sometimes talks of co-operation but the kind of co-operation it wants is usually known

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as surrender, and the ministers who accept office will have to do so at the price of surrender of much that they might have stood for in public. That is a humiliating position which self-respect itself should prevent one from accepting. For our great national organisation to be party to it is to give up the very basis and background of our existence.

There is only one straight course open to us, to go to the people with our programme and make it clear to them that we cannot give effect to the major items in it under present conditions, and therefore, while we use the platform of the legislatures to press that programme, we seek to end these imperialist bodies by creating deadlocks in them whenever we are in a position to do so. Those deadlocks should preferably take place on those programmes so that the masses might learn how ineffective for their purposes are these legislatures.

We must never forget and never delude our masses into imagining, that we can get any real power or real freedom through working these legislatures. We may use them certainly to advance our cause to some extent, but the burden of the struggle for freedom must fall on the masses, and primarily, therefore, our effective work must lie outside these legislatures. Strength will come from the masses and from our work among them and our organisation of them . . . . . .

*Broadening the Mass Basis of the Congress*

I have referred previously to the growing divorce between our organisation and the masses. Our present Congress constitution is, I feel, not helpful in developing these contacts or in encouraging enough the democratic spirit in its primary committees. These committees are practically rolls of voters who meet only to elect delegates or representatives, and take no part in discussion or the formation of policy.

It is interesting to read in that monumental and impressive record, the Webbs' new book on Russia, how the whole Soviet structure is based on a wide and living democratic foundation. Russia is not supposed to be a democratic country after the Western pattern, and yet we find the essentials of democracy present in far greater degree amongst the masses there than anywhere else. The six hundred thousand towns and villages there have a vast democratic organisation, each with its own soviet, constantly discussing, debating, criticising, helping in the formulation of policy, electing representatives to higher committees.

All this is of course utterly beyond us, for it requires a change in the political and economic structure and much else before we can experiment that way. But we can profit by that example still and try in our own limited way to develop democracy in the lowest rungs of the Congress ladder and make the primary committee a living organisation.

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An additional method for us to increase our contacts with the masses is to organise them as producers and then affiliate such organisations to the Congress or have full co-operation between the two. Such organisations of producers as exist to-day, such as trade unions and peasant unions, as well as other anti-imperialist organisations could also be brought within this sphere of mutual co-operation for the good of the masses and for the struggle for national freedom. Thus Congress could have an individual as well as a corporate membership, and retaining its individual character, could influence, and be influenced by, other mass elements . . . . . .

It seems to me necessary that the Congress should encourage the formation of peasant unions as well as workers' unions, and co-operate with such as already exist, so that the day-to-day struggle of the masses might be carried on on the basis of their economic demands and other grievances. This identification of the Congress with the economic struggle of the masses will bring us nearer to them and nearer to freedom than anything else. I would welcome also the organisation of other special interests, like those of the women, in the general framework of our national struggle for freedom. The Congress would be in a position to co-ordinate all these vital activities and thus to base itself on the widest possible mass foundation.

There has been some talk of a militant programme and militant action. I do not know what exactly is meant, but if direct action on a national scale or civil disobedience are meant, then I would say that I see no near prospect of them. Let us not indulge in tall talk before we are ready for big action. Our business to-day is to put our house in order, to sweep away the defeatist mentality of some people, and to build up our organisation with its mass affiliations, as well as to work amongst the masses. The time may come, and that sooner perhaps than we expect, when we might be put to the test. Let us get ready for that test. Civil disobedience and the like cannot be switched on and off when we feel like doing so. It depends on many things, some of which are beyond our control, but in these days of revolutionary change and constantly recurring crises in the world, events often move faster than we do. We shall not lack for opportunities.

The major problem of India to-day is that of the land—of rural poverty and unemployment and a thoroughly out-of-date land system. A curious combination of circumstances has held back India during the past few generations and the political and economic garments it wears no longer fit it and are torn and tattered. In some ways our agrarian conditions are not unlike those of France a hundred and fifty years ago, prior to the great revolution. They cannot continue so for long. At the same time we have become parts of international capitalism and we suffer the pains and crises which afflict this decaying system. As a result of these ele-

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mental urges and conflicts of world forces what will emerge in India none can say. But we can say with confidence that the present order has reached the evening of its day, and it is up to us to try to mould the future as we would like it to be. . . . .

To the progressive forces of the world, to those who stand for human freedom and the breaking of political and social bonds, we offer our full co-operation in their struggle against imperialism and fascist reaction, for we realise that our struggle is a common one. Our grievance is not against any people or any country as such, and we know that even in imperialist England, which throttles us, there are many who do not love imperialism and who stand for freedom.


## The Fifteenth Anniversary
### of the Labour Monthly

falls in July. We appeal to you to celebrate this event by so increasing circulation that we will require to print at least 8,000 copies that month. When, in February, we printed just over 7,000 copies, we put this figure of 8,000 as the objective to be reached before the Summer. This month we are printing 7,500. A further five hundred can be got by July if every reader makes a special effort. For instance :—

(*a*) Send us a list of those you think would be interested to receive a specimen copy of a back number with a subscription form inside. (Please note that those lists already sent in have produced good results).

(*b*) Approach your Public Library to take it or else the library of your trade union branch, co-operative, workers' club or party.

(*c*) Approach your newsagent yourself to display it more prominently, to take a display card (9 by 12 inches) supplied free by us, either to hang or to stand in his shop (specify which), or a current poster, or else send us his name and address for us to write him direct.

(*d*) Become an agent of the MONTHLY yourself by taking, on sale or return, 3 or more copies at our special rate of 4½d. a copy. Write us for further particulars.

(*e*) If you are already an agent increase your order this month and see whether you can get new readers.

The LABOUR MONTHLY is continually receiving from new readers appreciation in such terms as: "your admirable Monthly," "one of the finest Marxist theoretical publications that we have," "this champion of the working class cause." There must be hundreds more who, when once it is introduced to them, will think likewise. It is up to you to co-operate with us in getting hold of at least 5 of these hundreds by our 15th Anniversary and so enable us to

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# A WORKING-CLASS PEACE POLICY

## By HARRY POLLITT

[*As the issues raised in this article are considered by the* LABOUR MONTHLY *as of such vital importance to the whole movement, it has been decided to publish this article though it has been appearing in serial form in recent issues of the "Daily Worker," for it is felt that even those readers who have already perused the separate sections will welcome their availability in a collected form as this will facilitate the discussion that is likely to be raised. Certain abridgements have had to be made (indicated by . . .) and owing to pressure of space it proved unfortunately impossible to include certain of the concluding sections.*]

IT is commonly agreed that since 1914 the danger of war has never been so acute as at the present time. Yet we face an alarming state of confusion on the question of how to fight war resulting in an unpreparedness to take the necessary decisive actions that could certainly prevent the outbreak of war.

Never has there been such a general desire for peace amongst the peoples as now. But also never has there been such a lack of preparedness and organisation as would ensure peace through mass action against war. Undoubtedly this is known and realised by the National Government, and is utilised by them to speed up their war plans and preparations.

### *The War Danger has been no Unifying Factor*

Why has such a situation developed? Because it is no longer a matter of dealing with the question of war in general and in the abstract, but practically and immediately, in circumstances that are new and complicated, and which have raised many difficult problems. And also because there has been no clear working-class peace policy upon which all sections of the Labour and Peace movements could unite their forces against war in the actual circumstances of the present situation.

The whole position is a salutory reminder of Lenin's repeated warnings, that the fight against war is one of the most difficult tasks confronting the workers, and one that must be seriously undertaken with tireless patience and iron determination.

We have all tended too much to believe that the memories of the horrors and the suffering of the last war, combined with the menace of a

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new world war, would itself become the greatest unifying factor in bringing workers and all friends of Peace together in a great mass movement to prevent war.

*Actually, experience has proved that the nearer we get to war, or when a war has broken out, the danger of war or the war itself can act as an increasingly disunifying factor that plays right into the hands of the war-mongers.* We shall show the proof of this later, both in regard to experiences in the Italo-Abyssinian war and in regard to the events arising out of Hitler's denunciation of the Locarno Pact, the march into the Rhineland, and his so-called 25-years " Peace " proposals.

It is necessary to face frankly the problems that have arisen if we are speedily to rectify existing weaknesses in the struggle for peace.

There has been no really serious attempt to explain the new changes which have taken place in the world situation and the altered relations of forces which have raised new problems so far as war is concerned ; no really serious attempt at clearly differentiating between the character that various wars may assume . . . . .

*Present-day Confusions in the Peace Front*

It will not be difficult to give some example of the disunity and the confusion that exists inside the Labour Movement and amongst the various Peace organisations when it comes to an actual question of preventing war.

Let us recall the significance of the Peace Ballot that was organised under the auspices of the League of Nations Union last summer. Here was a Peace Ballot organised definitely against the will and desire of the National Government. Eleven-and-a-half million people voted for Peace, and eighty per cent. of those who took part in this ballot *voted for action being taken against an aggressor.* When very shortly afterwards, arising out of Italian fascism's attack on Abyssinia it became a question of taking definite measures that could effectively restrain a clearly defined fascist aggressor, we at once saw the difficulty of the task which confronts those who are anxious to maintain peace.

The decisions of the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party in regard to the policy to be pursued to restrain Mussolini, because it completely identified the Labour Movement with the policy of the National Government and the League of Nations, without in any way attempting to organise independent working-class action, caused big divisions in the ranks of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party.

In the Socialist League, although they differed from the policy of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party, there was a very substantial minority that was against the line adopted by the Socialist League Executive Committee.

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The National Peace Council was so divided on the question of what should be done that it was unable to make any clear statement of policy and took refuge in a dangerous proposal for a World Conference to bring about a more equitable redistribution of raw materials, a proposal which in the present circumstances of Fascist aggression lends a certain support to fascism's aggressive aims.

Inside the League of Nations Union branches there were also big differences as to what was the correct policy to adopt.

The I.L.P. had a line which was different from all other working-class organisations, and which objectively helped Italy's aggressive policy against Abyssinia.

The line of the Communist Party, I believe, was absolutely clear and correct, and if it had been adopted by the whole Labour Movement and Peace organisations, the frightful holocaust that has taken place in Abyssinia would have been avoided. Our line was not only that economic and financial sanctions such as the closing of the Suez Canal and the stoppage of all loans and war materials to Italy should be operated, but that workers should refuse to load and unload Italian ships in this country, that support be given to the anti-Fascist fighters in Italy itself, that the embargo on loans and arms to Abyssinia should be raised, and finally, that the United Front be developed at home and on an international scale. Thus the peoples of the world could bring such pressure on their respective capitalist governments as would compel them, and the League of Nations, to carry out these real measures against Mussolini's predatory aims, measures that if adopted could have stopped the war against Abyssinia at the same time as they would have strengthened the anti-Fascist struggle in Italy itself.

Even more serious, however, were the disunity, contradictions and confusion that arose when Hitler made his so-called 25-years " Peace " Pact offer on March 7, denounced the Locarno Treaty, and marched his troops once more into the Rhineland.

We found on this occasion that those who claimed to be the strongest champions of sanctions against Mussolini, were loudest in their insistence that there must be no talk of sanctions, or of any kind of measures that could act as a restraining force upon Hitler's warlike acts. Not only this, but they became the most vociferous exponents of the need to accept Hitler's " olive branch " and take him at " his face value."

Especially is this so of the Liberal, Labour and Pacifist Press of this country. In one of the most dangerous moments in the international situation since 1914, all these influential moulders of public opinion became the strongest supporters of Hitler's policy. This was all the more serious because the National Government has been responsible for arming, financing, and placing Hitler in his present menacing position to the peace of Europe.

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Large sections of pacifist opinion led by George Lansbury were also in favour of discussing the Hitler proposals. The National Peace Council was again undecided as to what line should be pursued. The League of Nations Union was unable to make any clear statement of policy. Alongside this, of course, we also saw the differences of opinion within the ruling class itself. Men like Churchill, Lord Eustace Percy, and Austen Chamberlain are in no doubt as to the serious threat of Hitler to European and British capitalist interests, but the dominant voice of British policy, of course, is represented by Baldwin and his Cabinet, which, having armed Hitler, did everything possible to prevent any real measures being taken to check Hitler at that critical moment.

Looking back on this situation it is clear that it was a most dangerous moment ; and the most disquieting fact we have to take note of is that, despite the years of steady and consistent propaganda for the defence of the U.S.S.R., despite the recognition that the U.S.S.R. is the one Workers' State which exists in the world and that from 1917 it has consistently worked for peace and has so far by its foreign policy been able to preserve the peace of the world, the *Daily Herald*, the Liberal press and pacifists, with regrettable rapidity and facility were all prepared to sacrifice the U.S.S.R. All these were prepared to do this for a " fancied security " to Britain by the acceptance of Hitler's proposals which offer " peace " for 25 years to certain countries in Europe, but leaving out the Soviet Union, and accompanied by the most vicious attacks on the Soviet Union.

No serious minded person, whether in the Labour Movement or interested in defending peace, can fail to be profoundly alarmed that such a situation could arise. Is it any wonder, therefore, that the *Daily Herald* was especially singled out for the doubtful honour of being the one British paper whose leading articles were daily quoted over the wireless by Goebbels.

Of course it is true that there was opposition to the line of the *Daily Herald* and the masses in the Labour Movement forced Labour leaders to speak out openly against it, and also forced it to modify its pro-Hitler line. *Nevertheless the fact remains that we can clearly see the divisions within the Labour and Peace Movements in this country in those critical March days. One section roused by Hitler's aggression would have supported any real measures directed to restrain him. Another section was for keeping out of the crisis at any price. Another section was for the acceptance of Hitler's Peace proposals, while still other sections were firmly behind the U.S.S.R. and prepared to defend it to the very death.*

But the point to which we have to give the most serious consideration is that in that literally eve-of-war situation, when one false step could easily have landed us into another world conflagration, instead of unity existing within the Labour and Peace movements against a fascist aggressor

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whose incendiary war aims were plain as a pikestaff for all to see, *the Peace Front was almost hopelessly divided, uncertain and confused, and was thus (perhaps quite unconsciously) giving considerable help to Hitler* . . . . .

### *Why we Fight War*

The peoples of the world feel in their very bones that their whole present and future is gravely menaced by the acute danger of war. They know that fascist war hounds are daily and hourly preparing to rush millions of men into war. Men, women, the youth and soldiers of all capitalist countries ask: "Is there no other future before us, only war?" They demand to know: "Is it not possible to prevent this terrible scourge which threatens humanity?"

We Communists must answer these questions. We must convince these millions that Peace can be preserved. We can give a reply which is in accordance with the daily interests of the masses and in accordance with their desire for peace . . . . .

Comrade Dimitrov put this aspect of the question quite plainly, when at the 7th Congress of the Communist International he said:

> It is true that imperialist wars are the product of capitalism, that only the overthrow of capitalism will put an end to all war; but it likewise is true that the toiling masses can obstruct imperialist war by their militant action.

We Communists recognising this, declare that in order to hinder war preparations and provocation, and to prevent the outbreak of war, we are prepared to support any measures outlined in Pacts of Non-Aggression, Peace Pacts of Mutual Assistance and the League of Nations Covenant, that we are prepared to give full support to all measures aimed at building up collective security, and that we are for developing all forms of independent action on the part of the workers in the struggle to maintain peace. Whilst we support and utilise all these measures for the purpose of retarding and preventing war, we also openly state to the working men and women and peace-loving peoples, that the only final guarantee that war can be abolished for ever, is the conquest of power by the workers, the ending of capitalism, and the establishment of the workers' state and workers' rule . . . . .

### *The Differences between* 1914 *and To-day*

It is said that the present situation is 1914 all over again. It is nothing of the sort. There are the most profound and fundamental differences between the situation in 1936 and that of 1914.

In 1914 no one could see which was the aggressive imperialist power. All capitalist governments involved in the last world war were equally to blame and equally responsible. In 1914 it was impossible to put one's finger on the open and avowed aggressor, but one can place it on Hitler in 1936.

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In 1914 a number of countries in Europe did not stand directly under the menace of a military attack from a fascist aggressor. They do in 1936.

In 1914 there was no Soviet Union in existence. In 1936 the mighty Soviet Union goes from triumph to triumph in every realm of Socialist construction. It has carried out in the international arena a firm policy of peace because it has no interest in war, no imperialist aims, and because it menaces not a single inch of any country's territory in the world.

In 1914 every important capitalist state was interested in war. To-day, in 1936, there are a number of such capitalist states who at the present moment are not interested in war.

These are vital new factors in the present international situation which all thinking working men and women would do well to understand because they represent such a change from the situation of 1914 that they inevitably demand a change in our attitude as to how the peace of the world can be preserved.

*Who are the Aggressors To-day?*

Who can be blind as to who are these fascist aggressors in the world to-day? Japan, with its policy of conquest in Manchuria, and now capturing Chinese territory, becomes a menace not only to China and the Soviet Union, but to Britain and the United States of America. Italy, with its frightful devastation and destruction in Abyssinia. In the very heart of Europe, almost on our doorstep, but certainly on the doorstep of the peoples of France, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Belgium, stands the chief incendiary of war to-day—Hitler.

Isn't this a new situation? Isn't it clear that Fascism in Germany, having literally created a hell for the German people, having destroyed the German Labour Movement, having put back the march of progress and culture, having resorted to the most frightful measures to drive its people into the dust, now proposes to take exactly the same offensive against other countries, and to establish a similar regime to that existing in Germany over any country it is allowed to conquer.

Isn't it clear that this creates a new type of war danger, and if not resisted will result in destruction, oppression and death for the peoples of other countries?

We seem to forget that the victory of fascism over any country in Europe to-day not only means a military victory, but within the defeated country means the suppression of the Labour Movement, repression of all scientific and cultural thought. It means on a more intensified scale a repetition of the frightful atrocities and measures that have been inflicted on the German people which have already appalled the world.

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Isn't this a new situation which demands a new approach to the whole question of how peace can be maintained and whether the fascist aggressor can be restrained and effectively checked ?

How correct was the characterisation of the rôle of Hitler as stated by Dimitrov at the 7th World Congress :

> German fascism is acting as the spearhead of international counter-revolution, as the chief incendiary of imperialist war ; as the initiator of a crusade against the Soviet Union, the great Fatherland of the toilers of the whole world.

In the light of this situation, the restraining of Hitler, the prevention of any further acts of fascist aggression, the maintenance of the peace of the world, become the paramount duty of the international working-class movement, and, in the fight to achieve this, the workers will not only be defending all their own immediate interests, they will be defending the interests of mankind.

### *New Forces and Factors for Peace*

Through the fulfilment of this duty they will be able to build up the power, the strength, the organisation, that can bring about the defeat of Fascism and ensure the final victory of Socialism. This great aim, the greatest the working-class movement can ever set out to accomplish, can only be carried out by formulating a working-class Peace policy in accordance with the situation in each particular country, with the driving power of the United Front firmly established in Britain and on an international scale. These are the indispensable means for the successful maintenance of the peace of the world.

To-day there are new forces and factors which can be organised to assist in the carrying through of this aim of preventing war. What are they ? Let me again quote from Dimitrov's speech at the 7th Congress :

> The popular hatred of war is constantly gaining in depth and intensity. In pushing the toilers into the abyss of imperialist wars the bourgeoisie is staking its head.
>
> To-day not only the working class, the peasantry and other toilers champion the cause of the preservation of peace, but also the oppressed nations and weak peoples whose independence is threatened by new wars.
>
> Even some of the capitalist states, afraid of losing out in a new re-division of the world, are interested at the present stage in the avoidance of war.
>
> This gives rise to the possibility of forming a most extensive front of the working class, of all toilers, and of entire nations against the threat of imperialist war.
>
> The extent to which this world-wide front is realised and put into action will determine whether the fascist and other imperialist war incendiaries will be able in the near future to kindle a new imperialist war, or whether their fiendish hands will be hacked off by the axe of a powerful anti-war front.

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Why has it become possible for German fascism to become such a menace to the peace of the world? It is because its way to power was not barred at the right time by the German Social Democratic leaders who refused to establish the United Front; because of the assistance that Hitler has received from the National Government, not only in the form of armaments and loans, but in their endeavour to prevent any effective measures being taken against him; because of the failure of the League of Nations to defend Manchuria, and the independence of China against the predatory wars of Japan; because of the waverings and vacillations and weak policy carried out by the League of Nations in defending the independence of Abyssinia; and finally, because of the refusal by the Labour Movement in a number of the most decisive countries like Britain, Czechoslovakia, and the Scandinavian countries of united action, which has led to the rejection of the repeated proposals for joint action against war made by the Communist International to the Second International.

These are the reasons why Hitler is the menace to the peace of Europe at the present time.

### *What is Needed to Secure a United Peace Front?*

If the workers' ranks were united, if the policy of the Labour Movement had not been completely adapted and made subject to the policy of the League of Nations and the National Government, then there would be a different situation to face.

We have to formulate our Peace policy, not in a situation that we would like to exist, but as it actually does exist at the present time.

It is an eve of war situation, but we Communists believe that late as the hour is, it is not too late to maintain peace. Peace can be preserved. Fascist aggressors can be held in check. The working-class movement can gain a further breathing space in which it can continue to build up its united power and solidarity. But it goes without saying that all this depends upon certain indispensable conditions being carried out. These, we suggest, are as follows:

I. The bringing about of a really effective and mighty mobilisation of the workers, that can lead to definite united action being taken to prevent war.

II. The development of such united action amongst the workers that its power and strength will attract broad masses of people to its support and active participation, who are not directly connected with the Labour Movement, but who are opposed to Fascism and War.

III. The convincing of all genuine supporters of Peace of the need to deliver powerful blows directly against Fascist aggressors like Hitler, and those who support him directly—the National

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Government—or indirectly like those who believe in accepting his false " Peace " gestures.

iv. The recognition of the new features in the international situation, and being ready to work alongside all those peoples and Governments who are interested (despite their immediate motives) in maintaining peace, and in carrying out Peace measures against Fascist war provocateurs.

v. Above all, by acting upon the recognition, that only on the basis of the United Front of the working-class movement, can the workers take independent action, and the broad masses of the people be organised in such a way as can compel the National Government to adopt decisive measures to restrain Fascist aggression.

On such a basis as this a united peace policy can be achieved that would win important successes. No one will dispute that the people do not want war. They desire an end to the constant war threats, alarms, and menace to their security. As practical experience abundantly proves, where the United Front is effectively carried through by the whole working-class movement, as in France and Spain, the mass of the people are drawn into activity alongside the organised workers, and are able to check the advance of Fascism.

The mad dogs of Fascism will never be hemmed in and prevented from carrying out their devilish work by " olive branches " and " pacifists' prayers," by high-faluting talk about " only concerning oneself with one's own capitalist class," by " revolutionary " phrasemongering, now the hall mark of the I.L.P. The mad dogs of Fascism will only be securely leashed when a mighty United Front has been achieved on a national and international scale.

This is the fact that must be burned into the mind of every British worker because the greatest obstacle to this aim is the resistance of the British Labour leaders to the formation of such a United Front. Unless this resistance is definitely broken we shall never be able to strike decisive blows against the Fascists directly preparing war, or against those who by their policy directly or indirectly give support to the Fascist war makers.

### *First Fight the National Government*

Against whom has the main blow to be struck in Britain ? Undoubtedly at the National Government. If Hitler is a menace in Europe, it is because of Baldwin. I do not propose to go into detail to prove this statement by fact and argument ; in the current issue of the *Communist International* there is an article of mine in which I believe I proved this point up to the hilt.

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The price of peace in Europe demands the defeat of the National Government. The character of the Peace movement in Britain is the decisive factor in the international situation to-day. How can it be brought about? Only by a complete break with all policies of class co-operation involving identifying of Labour policy with the interests of the capitalist class, and through the bringing into being of a United Front of all sections of the working-class movement on the basis of a common programme of immediate demands, economic, political and social, to commence the organisation of the workers' struggle to achieve this by utilising every means of mass action.

In this way a formidable mass movement can be brought into being which will fight against the whole policy of the National Government, and by its power begin to force immediate concessions. What are the demands which will form a basis for such activity?

They are demands for wage increases; the abolition of the Means Test; shorter hours; better housing at rents within workers' capacity to pay; improved conditions in the factories; rigid application of all safety precautions in mill, mine and factory. Complete opposition to the whole defence programme of the National Government and that the proposed expenditure shall be used exclusively for Work Schemes of social value carried through in conjunction with the Trade Union Movement. Abolition of the Sedition Act; better pay, improved conditions, more leave, and pensions for the armed forces with full democratic rights and free participation in all working-class political activities. No industrial truce or co-operation in the carrying out of the Government's war plan.

In the field of foreign policy, the organisation of mass support to compel the National Government to use all the available resources of the League of Nations to safeguard the independence of Abyssinia, the workers at the same time taking direct action to prevent any trains or ships destined for Italy being loaded or unloaded. To force the National Government to stop its support of Hitler; to back the Franco-Soviet Pact and to sign a Pact of Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union. To end the support given by the National Government to reactionary Governments in the Balkans, whereby they strengthen Hitler and increase the menace against the Soviet Union. To end the waverings and vacillations of the League of Nations, and to help it become a really effective instrument in building collective security of such a type and character that no fascist war provocateurs would dare to commit any further acts of aggression.

If alongside such a campaign there were carried out a steady recruitment into the trade unions with the election of shop stewards in the factories officially endorsed by the trade union branches, the whole working-class movement would not only steadily increase its united strength, it would be able to carry out its own policy, independent of any backstairs manœuvring carried out by the various capitalist governments and League of

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Nations. It would attract to its support all people who want to preserve peace and democracy, and would speedily bring about a change in the whole international situation lessening the danger of war.

*Nothing that can do this can be rejected by any honest worker or lover of peace.*

Such a mass movement as this could not only result in a position of economic and political ferment in which the National Government would be defeated, it could also end any further possibility of Fascism taking the offensive because of the lack of unity in the workers' ranks.

It would end the support now being given to Hitler by certain Labour leaders and especially by the *Daily Herald* under cover of a hypocritical desire " to maintain peace by accepting Hitler's Peace proposals."

It would end the subordination of the workers' interests and policy to that of the National Government, and would open up the way to the British Labour movement taking the part it should in the international Labour Movement as the champions of international solidarity, and not as now, its disruptors.

### *A Platform for International Solidarity*

Regrettable as it is to say so, it has to be stated that, apart from the propaganda and work of the Communist Parties, there never was so little international working-class propaganda and development of international solidarity as now. No one can declare with even a vestige of truth that the deliberations of the Second International and International Federation of Trade Unions ever reach down to the broad masses.

When does one hear of the Labour leaders of Britain arranging great international meetings at which speakers from the working-class movement of other countries could bring their greetings and experiences? At least these speakers would not be refused visas as the Communist speakers are.

Even in the critical March days when the whole of the leaders of the Second International and International Federation of Trade Unions met in London, no great demonstrations of international solidarity were held in the Albert Hall in London, the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, the City Hall in Sheffield, or the St. Andrew's Hall in Glasgow. Everything behind closed doors. Everything to fit in with the requirements of the National Government and the League of Nations Council Assembly.

Can anyone imagine, that if the Communist International were allowed to hold its Executive Committee meetings in London, that Dimitrov, Thorez, Cachin, Ercoli, Pieck, Pollitt and others, would not have addressed great masses of people and roused them to the struggle for peace, to a white-hot hatred of fascism? These meetings would have developed international solidarity of thought and action in not only leading a way to definite action to restrain a Hitler or a Mussolini, but would have helped



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the German and Italian people in their struggle against Fascism within their own country.

Therefore it is urgently necessary to develop a platform of international action and solidarity, in which workers' organisations in every country can take part. But just as there are certain conditions to be observed before the United Front can be established on a national scale, so if it is to have real meaning, must there be a clear understanding upon what basis international campaigns and actions can be undertaken, and a completely unified international working-class policy carried out.

It seems to me that there are four essential points on which there must be agreement in arriving at such a platform of working-class international action :

1. Complete break with all policies of class co-operation and identification of working-class parties with the interests of the capitalists and participation in their Governments.
2. The greatest possible measure of support for the Peace policy of the Soviet Union, its recognition as the Workers' State and principal guardian for maintaining peace for the peoples of the world. This necessitates the most determined struggle against all counter revolutionary attempts to depict the foreign policy of the Soviet Union as having anything in common with the foreign policy of imperialist governments.

   For all such propaganda plays absolutely into the hands of the Fascist aggressors and facilitates their aim of fomenting war and especially war against the Soviet Union.
3. Agreement on the necessity of taking action at the right moment and in the most telling way against the Fascist aggressor. But this also presupposes exposing every attempt to water down and nullify the undoubted differences that exist between Fascist and non-Fascist countries. And also against the theory " that all governments bear equal responsibility for the preparation and launching of war."
4. Organising the mass actions and struggles of the workers independently of the policy of the various capitalist governments and the League of Nations. This means ending the subjection of the interests and actions of the workers to those of their capitalist governments, and the backstairs negotiations and diplomacy of these governments and the League of Nations of which they are members.

If the workers of the British Labour Movement insist upon their leaders withdrawing their opposition to the united front and adopting such a platform of struggle nationally and internationally as we have outlined, a speedy change will manifest itself in the whole working-class struggle

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to improve immediate conditions, and to prevent effectively any further growth of fascist aggression, thus ensuring that peace can be maintained.

### *The Problems of the Fight for Peace in Britain*

In the preceding paragraphs we endeavoured to outline a Peace policy upon which all sections of the working-class movement, together with various Peace organisations, could unite. They indicated the general line of a working-class peace policy that could be adopted nationally and internationally.

In what follows we shall attempt to deal with some of the concrete problems and questions that inevitably arise in the struggle to maintain peace. This will be done strictly from the viewpoint of British conditions, for it should be self-evident that whilst there can be a common international working-class peace policy, there are many tactical questions in the various countries that have to be solved according to the actual circumstances and conditions prevailing in those countries.

In all countries, however, questions are constantly coming up to which it is the duty of Communists, especially, to give clear and definite answers, for whilst it is easy to make " general propaganda for peace," easy to limit oneself to phrasemongering about " fighting for Socialism," or " calling a General Strike when war breaks out," this type of " policy " simply deceives workers, and, because it remains only a mass of generalities without any relation to the concrete and immediate problems facing the workers, helps the warmongers and especially the fascist aggressors, and hinders any positive advance being made towards Socialism.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised in our opinion that the fight to maintain Peace is also the most effective contribution that can be made towards achieving Socialism.

The Communist Party attempts to give a clear, practical and concrete lead on how to fight the Means Test, how to run a strike, how to develop powerful trade unionism ; but it has also the duty of doing this in relation to the problems that inevitably arise in the struggle for peace.

### *Can we Oppose British Rearmament, but Support Sanctions?*

It is said that if you are in favour of applying economic and financial sanctions you cannot oppose the proposals of the National Government to increase the armed power and forces of Britain ; that it is illogical to demand collective security and oppose the National Defence plan of the National Government. This is the favourite trick of Baldwin and MacDonald, and is simply used to deceive and confuse the workers and help the war plans of the National Government.

We oppose *all* the National Government's rearmament proposals, for we know the purpose for which this rearmament is taking place. It is

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not to defend the interests of the mass of the people, but the profits, property, and Empire owned by a tiny section of the British ruling class.

Only when power is in the hands of the working class will it be possible to speak about a real and reliable defence of Britain, and in such circumstances it would be our duty to defend our own country, as the comrades in the Soviet Union are prepared to defend theirs. But power is not in our hands, and therefore the workers have no guarantee as to how the so-called "defence" forces will be used. What they do understand is that in these circumstances, the more powerful the development of the armed forces, the more powerful become the weapons of coercion against the workers at home and against millions of oppressed colonial peoples.

If the capitalist governments really had any intention of applying effectively the principle of collective security, they have sufficient economic and financial power now at their disposal to bring any fascist aggressor to heel *without any increase in their present armed forces at all.*

But observe what is happening at the moment. The chief war aggressor is Fascist Germany, yet it is precisely this country for which the National Government is most actively trying to secure further big loans, presumably in order to help Hitler to increase still further his armed forces, and then say: "Look what Hitler is doing! We must do the same."

The National Government has armed Fascist Germany and now attempts to use this as the bogey to carry through its own rearmament plans.

The workers should firmly oppose the whole of the rearmament plans of the National Government, and their representatives in Parliament should vote against all the Army, Navy and Air Estimates.

### *Shall we Participate in Gas Drill?*

Some people, however, say: "That sounds fine, but what about protecting the people from bombing raids and poison gas?"

Here also, our policy needs to be adapted to the concrete situation. The Communist Party was the first to lead the opposition to gas drill and gas masks as an important means of organising the mass of the people against the National Government's war preparations. We did not do this from the academic point of view that gas masks could not be made effective or that there was no protection against bombing from the air. We did not enter into polemical discussions as to what various experts had to say about the efficiency of one form of gas mask or another. We did it as a political task that helped us to impress upon masses of people the nearness of war, and to use this as a means of organising mass opposition to the Government whose policy has so undoubtedly helped to bring war nearer. . . . .

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There can be no doubt that the campaign against gas drill and gas masks had a certain effect and won a certain mass support, but not sufficient to prevent the Government from beginning now to carry out its programme.

Already certain definite areas have been selected for gas drill, bomb-proof shelters and gas masks. These areas are stated to be those which stand in the greatest danger of attack and bombing from the air.

Now, however, we have to face the position that once this is organised, masses of people will take part. The organs of government propaganda and machinery will be got to work.

Can the working-class movement take up a negative attitude to this situation? Of course not. It is a new situation that calls for a working-class policy to meet it. What should that policy be? It should be to insist that any gas masks that are issued to the workers must be the very best that can be produced, and must be distributed free of charge, that any bomb-proof shelters that are constructed shall be as effectively built for the workers as for the rich in the West End of London, that gas drill shall be freed from all military control and propaganda, and that the local Labour and Peace Movements shall have the responsibility for ensuring the whole of these arrangements.

The workers must also insist that the whole cost of those measures which the National Government declare to be now necessary shall be borne by the rich, and not in any way be the subject of local taxation or indirect taxation through the medium of the State budget.

We must say to the National Government: "You have wrecked every proposal making for complete or partial disarmament, for the abolition of bombing from the air, or of any form of chemical warfare; you have financed and armed Hitler and given him his biggest political support. Now you say that our lives are in danger, that you want to carry out certain precautionary measures. Then carry them out at the expense of your own class, and we shall insist upon no dud gas masks, no shoddy bomb shelters, no military drill in connection with gas drill. We demand for those workers whom you say are in danger, the same type of gas mask and the same type of bomb-proof shelter as you will provide for the King and his family, and the whole circle in which they move."

If a terrific exposure of the whole line of the National Government's policy is also carried out, the very atmosphere they hope to create to stimulate recruiting and get the civilian population to support their war aims, can be used to develop mass opposition to the Government and to preserve peace.

It will, of course, be easy to say that the whole thing has nothing to do with the workers, and that they have no need to have a policy on it. This is bilking a difficult situation, instead of trying to solve it in such a way as

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will very considerably weaken the Government and strengthen the cause of peace.

We can say to the workers, " Have nothing to do with it," but will that stop the carrying out of these measures " for protecting the people ? " Any one who saw the rush to get down to shelters in London during the last war realises at once that a similar state of affairs can develop again, and unless such agitation is conducted as we have described, then it will be used to strengthen the political position of the National Government and to stimulate militarism and a hatred for workers of other countries . . . .

We should, therefore, campaign, without in any way supporting the National Government and its war preparations, for the whole control and direction of gas drill, etc., to be in the hands of those who believe in peace and who will prevent the natural desire of the people for protection against bombing from being exploited for military purposes.

This should be combined with mass pressure upon the National Government to conclude a Pact of Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union, to abandon its alliance with Hitler, and to give real support to the principle of collective security in order to maintain peace.

*Are we for the Redistribution of the Colonies or for their Independence ?*

One of the most dangerous proposals along which the mass struggle to maintain the peace of the world is being sidetracked, is that there should now be a " more equitable distribution of colonies, mandates, and access to raw materials and undeveloped countries " amongst all the advanced capitalist countries, having especially in mind Fascist Germany.

It is argued that if there was a more equitable redistribution of raw materials and markets, then one of the main causes of war would disappear and peace would thus be assured.

Now can anyone imagine a single imperialist power agreeing to give up any of its possessions ? Never was the competition for the world market, for spheres of influence, for control of the sources of raw material and cheap colonial labour so intense as it is now.

Can anyone imagine American imperialism agreeing to share its exploitation of the Philipines with Japan, or British imperialism sharing parts of Australia or Africa with Japan or Germany ? Or France sharing its colonial possessions with any of its rivals ?

Haven't we had one World Economic Conference in 1932, and didn't it end in complete failure because of the inability of the imperialist powers to solve the contradictions their own system breeds ?

Even if any such ideas of redistribution of raw materials, etc., as certain advocates are busily popularising, were carried out, so long as capitalist economy remains, it would only intensify still further capitalist trade rivalries and antagonisms.

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Are those who so glibly argue for this supposed panacea aware, that even if it could be applied it would result in strengthening the basis of the Fascist aggressors, would improve their economic and military position and render them still stronger to carry out their war plans on an even bigger scale in Europe itself ?

And who, if you please, gave the Labour Party, Trades Union Congress and National Peace Council the authority to make proposals for a World Economic Conference to be called to effect " the international control of the sources and supply of raw materials " that affects countries over which we have not the slightest right to presume to settle their destinies ?

Just as the *Daily Herald* and the pacifist press were prepared to sacrifice the Soviet Union to Hitler in the hope that his eyes would turn permanently East, so they believe they can buy off Hitler by giving him opportunities to share in the imperialist exploitation of colonial countries.

But has not experience shown that Fascist appetites are only whetted by what they feed on ? Has Japan stopped its aggression with the capture of Manchuria ? Doesn't she now threaten the whole of China, and, as the Tanaka Memorandum set out, the whole of Asia—a policy which is likely eventually to involve Britain and America in a war with Japan ? Was Mussolini restrained by promises of certain parts of Abyssinia, or has experience shown that he is after the lot.

The proposal to give Hitler a share in the imperialist booty would strengthen his whole economic and military position and make him a greater danger than ever to the peace of the world.

The workers, whilst repudiating all responsibility for imperialist robbery and for the mandate system, cannot give any support to these proposals for a redistribution of colonies, mandates, and raw materials. Not a single inch of ground should be given to any section of the Labour and Peace Movements on this question. If it is, it will incur still more hatred by the oppressed colonial peoples, whom we have done little enough to help in the past. To support any proposals, however " well meaning," that involve the handing of colonies and mandates to a Mussolini or a Hitler would indeed be a direct encouragement and incitement to further aggression. The robbery, butchery and repression carried out by all imperialist powers with the aid of armed violence against colonial countries is dreadful, and we have to do a thousand times more than we are doing to fight against it.

The working-class movement must, therefore, have nothing to do with such a policy. It is not the workers' business to occupy themselves with these questions ; their duty is to help the colonial peoples to throw off the yoke of all imperialist powers. It is especially the duty of the British working class to do everything in its power to help the colonial peoples

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enslaved by British imperialism to obtain their complete national freedom and independence.

To help achieve this fundamental principle (a vital test for any Socialist and democrat), we should demand the immediate withdrawal of all imperialist armed forces from the colonies and mandated territories and work to organise workers' action to prevent the transport of troops and munitions to the colonies.

We must actively assist and support the struggle for national liberation of the oppressed peoples, fight against the suppression of colonial risings, against the growth of military aggression, against the extension of the mandatory system which gives the right to imperialist countries to rule over millions of people in order to plunder them and their country.

The workers should also demand the right of the colonial people in the mandated territories to be fully represented on the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League, and the right of the Commission and the League to send Commissions of Investigation into the mandated territories.

Alongside this general campaign, the workers must demand for the oppressed peoples of the colonial countries complete freedom of press and opinion, the legal existence of Trade Union and political organisation, universal adult suffrage, the repeal of all repressive measures such as Press Acts, Sedition Laws and Special Ordinances, immediate improvement in housing, sanitation and health conditions and the right of British workers to send their own organisers and helpers to the colonial countries to assist in the organisation of the people for the realisation of these objectives and as a gesture of real international working-class solidarity.

This is the policy to oppose to the misguided attempts at sidetracking the real mass fight against war by airy talk about redistributing the colonies which do not belong to those who advocate this action.

This is the policy which would weaken *all imperialist exploitation*, encourage the national liberation movement in the colonial countries themselves, and prevent the Fascists from extending their power through the help given them by Labour leaders playing at being statesmen, and pacifists unblushingly condemning millions of people to a worse terror and bloodier violence by handing them over to a Mussolini or a Hitler.

This is the way to strike blows against the National Government, to weaken its hold on the colonies and to help develop a common struggle against a common enemy and lead up to the final conquest of power, when, on the basis of Socialist economy, the peoples of the world will freely exchange their products, raw materials and foodstuffs for the common well-being of the working population of all countries.

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*The Peace Policy of the Socialist and Trade Union Internationals*

What should be our attitude towards the decisions taken at the recent London Conference of the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions ?

As is well known, last October, Comrade Dimitrov, General Secretary of the Communist International, addressed a proposal for joint action between the Socialist and Communist Internationals to end the war in Abyssinia. That appeal was rejected under the influence of the British Labour leaders.

Who can doubt that if it had been accepted, the organised workers of the world by their own independent actions and mass pressure of their Governments could long ago have stopped this war ? Who can doubt that such a check to an avowed aggressor would have had a salutary effect upon Hitler ?

The vacillations of the League of Nations and its shameful refusal really to apply economic and financial sanctions, especially oil sanctions against Mussolini, has been the strongest factor in helping him achieve his present position in Abyssinia, and the frightful slaughter he has carried out.

The International Federation of Trade Unions and Second International also bear a heavy responsibility for they had the power to organise the direct action of the workers themselves, who could have operated working-class measures that would have rallied the people of the whole world behind them.

They did not do this, and this fact has to be connected with their refusal of the united front also.

It was a criminal weakness on the part of the international Labour leaders that after all that has happened since, and especially after Hitler's acts of war on March 7, they did not invite to the London Conference of March 20 and 21, representatives of the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions.

However, we now have to define our attitude towards the decisions of this conference, for they have been unanimously adopted by the National Council of Labour, representing the Labour Party, the Trades Union Congress, and Co-operative Party, and thus have become the official platform of the Labour Movement of Britain.

The essence of the resolution adopted at the London Conference reads as follows :

> The peace of the world is threatened. . . . There is only one means by which it can be safeguarded. We must resolutely organise collective security. The League Pact should be extended and be applied through the League of Nations as widely as possible.

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> Peace is indivisible. All must rally unhesitatingly to the support of any state attacked by an aggressor and an agreement must be made to this end.
>
> This agreement must provide for prompt and united support for any victim of aggression. It should be general and open to all in conformity with the principles of the League of Nations and consequently must not include any discrimination against Soviet Russia, such as Hitler's proposals imply.

We can support the general aims set out here, and also declare our readiness to campaign jointly for them, because without a mass campaign they will remain aims, and lack concrete mass support and force. We can also accompany such support with propaganda amongst the masses to develop a much more effective peace policy and one which does not place full reliance on the capitalist governments and the League of Nations, but also organises the independent actions of the workers against an aggressor, one that will demand an all-round reduction in armaments and the adoption of effective measures at the right moment against an avowed aggressor, *i.e.*, stoppage of financial loans and commerce, refusal to load and unload ships, and will demand the signing of a pact of mutual assistance between Britain and the Soviet Union, one that will put life and meaning into the aims set out in the London resolution through the medium of these actions.

We Communists will support all measures that help to maintain peace, however inadequate we think they are, because the maintenance of peace overrides every issue facing the workers. At the same time, we shall endeavour to strengthen all such weak measures by our positive proposals and actions.

Unless such a campaign as we have in mind is undertaken, the masses will never know that such a Declaration of Policy has been made in their name. Its popularisation needs great united meetings, demonstrations, conferences, leaflets, pamphlets, endless propaganda, and explanation wherever workers are gathered together.

### *A Still Stronger Peace Policy Needed*

But we have also the duty to point out clearly to the workers the weak side of the London Conference, for we cannot remain silent on questions which affect the entire future welfare of millions of the world's workers.

The London Conference evaded its chief task in the struggle to preserve world peace, that of ending the opposition and resistance to the establishment of the United Front on a national and international scale. It did not take any steps to organise the workers' own action against Mussolini and Hitler, but restricted everything to the League of Nations. It made no practical effort to mobilise in a common movement for genuine mass struggle, all those who long for peace and hate war. It did not openly

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condemn those of its leaders who were the chief opponents of the United Front at the same time as they were clamouring through the *Daily Herald* and the Scandinavian Labour papers for "accepting Hitler's peace proposals," thus helping Fascist aggression at a most fateful moment in the international situation when peace or war was literally in the balance. It made no protest about Japan's carving up of China, and outlined no policy whereby the workers could assist the magnificent struggle of the Chinese people in resisting Japanese aggression in China.

The explaining of these facts to the workers will not impede the fight for peace. It will rouse their vigilance, it will cause them to pay more attention to decisions taken in their name, and the more enlightened the masses of the workers become, the greater the guarantee that even inadequate resolutions which are only tiny contributions to the cause of peace will be carried out.

This should be the workers' attitude to the London Conference, and we believe that if it is popularised amongst the masses, could exercise a profound effect upon the workers and bring nearer the realisation of a united front capable of maintaining peace on a national and international scale.

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# BOOK REVIEWS

## SEEKING THE CURE FOR MENTAL ILLNESS.

*The New Path to Progress.* By Samuel D. Schmalhausen. John Lane. pp. 409. 12s. 6d.

THE main theme of this book is that much of the mental illness occurring in capitalist countries is a more or less direct product of the inherent contradictions of the capitalist system itself, and that when that system is abolished and replaced by a communist society, then the conditions giving rise to this mental illness will have been removed just as the conditions giving rise to much physical illness and premature death will be removed. The book, in spite of its many defects of presentation is to be welcomed. For its author is a specialist in psychology who has been forced from the study of his own speciality to consider it from the wider social aspect, and has thereby come to the position where he sees that communism can provide the solution, that it is a question not so much of individual therapy as of social therapy.

This is one of the first attempts to indicate the nature of this solution, of the way in which the mental illnesses of all degrees that torment people living under the contradictory tensions of capitalism in decay are generated and can be cured.

Capitalism produces an enormous volume of mental illness and consequent misery which extends far beyond the actual patients so afflicted. The wastage of human life and potentialities is appallingly great, much greater than shown by the mere figures of complete breakdown. In the majority of cases it is not a question of curing a mental illness acquired like a broken leg in an accident, which will heal rapidly in a healthy person. It is a question of the whole environment of capitalist society which produces and maintains, day after day, its inevitable quota of mental illness. Schmalhausen's book gives many examples of the mental havoc that capitalism sows, of the many ways in which mental disease is produced in relation to sex, the family and society in general. Schmalhausen gives a good criticism of current psycho-therapies, in particular those of Freud and Jung, showing their ultimate ineffectiveness in that often they are seeking to remove the symptoms of a disease rather than the basic causes of it.

Communism will be able, and is already beginning to be able in the U.S.S.R., to provide the pre-requisite economic basis for the building of a mentally healthy society ; preventive medicine will become possible in the field of psychology.

With so much good to be found in Schmalhausen's book as regards general outlook and much of the matter, it is a great pity that it suffers from defects that much reduce its effectiveness. The chief defect is that of style and manner of presentation. There is repetition, due to the fact that this is a collection of long essays rather than a planned book. It should have been severely edited to eliminate this redundancy. But beyond this, the author's style makes the book very difficult to read ; it is a complex of riotous verbiage, with a rabelaisian wealth of allusion and quotation, which makes it difficult to see the wood for the trees. Some of the quotation is required illustration of the many modern psychologists, " thinkers," philosophers and propagandists of capitalist ideology whom he criticises pertinently and deservedly. But much of the other quotation is uncritical embellishment of statements that would carry more weight if written simply and directly. Schmalhausen's gusto is so great, in this and other respects, and so much is crammed into this book of 400 pages, that its resulting haggis-like composition dulls the intellectual appetite. Schmalhausen was apparently so carried away by his discovery of what Marxism could contribute to his particular speciality, the problems of which had thrust themselves forward to the position where the radical solution of

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communism was the only practical one, that he wanted to spill out on paper all the clarifying criticism of the present state of things in the psychological field that was revealed to him. The unfortunate result is that too much is attempted and the book is much too diffuse and lacks incisiveness. It would provide the basis for a much shorter but better planned and better controlled exposition of the book's contents.

In such a book, overwhelming as it often is with its spate of words, it is not difficult to pick out statements that are incorrect statements of dialectical materialism. The author is evidently uncritical of what he has read in fields outside his own speciality. and he has not thought out carefully enough some of the more general philosophical statements of his book. This is shown for example by the discussion of reality at the beginning of Chap. 3, Part 1, which is bad. Schmalhausen says :

> Materialism as a description of nature was presumed to be vastly more real than idealism until Quantum mechanics playfully threw a few monkey-wrenches into the underlying principle of strict determinism and iron-bound causality (p. 56).

This is not the place to discuss all the questions that this quotation raises. But it may be pointed out that " strict determinism " and " iron-bound causality," baldly unqualified, are no part of dialectical materialism, and that developments of quantum mechanics in no way effect the basic cleavage between materialism and idealism in philosophy. Every advance in scientific observation is only a further support for *dialectical* materialism ; only the temporary interpretation of observation may be sometimes used to support idealist philosophy. The further developments of science, that is the test of practice, will disprove the idealist theory. Similarly, Schmalhausen asks :

> Are tables real ? The old physics was absolutely sure they were, the new physics is relatively sure they are not. . . . . Is consciousness real ? To Eddington there can be nothing in the universe imaginable more real. To John B. Watson (the behaviourist philosopher . . . J.K.) nothing in the universe imaginable is so unreal, irrelevant, empty " (p. 56).

It is evident from these quotations that the author has not grasped the essential position of dialectical materialism that " the sole ' property ' of matter—with the recognition of which materialism is vitally connected—is the property of being objective reality, of existing outside our cognition " (Lenin, *Empirio-criticism*, p. 220. Martin Lawrence edition). If he had understood this he would not have asked his questions as to the " reality " of a table to the old and new physics. What the new physics has done, has been to push the analysis of matter a stage further than it had been taken by the old physics, which showed the composition of the chemical elements as made up of electrons and protons, further extended by the modern study of the atomic nucleus. This was analogous to the analysis of matter which first showed that all compounds were made from a limited number of chemical elements. The further developments of modern physics, involving the interconversion of (physical) matter and " energy " is of the same kind of deepening analysis. The existence of matter, something objectively existing apart form our knowledge of it, is not called in question, although idealist philosophers like to pretend that it is. Much of this confusion is due to the failure to grasp the definition of matter given above, and looking upon matter as " solid " matter, atoms, particles.

The matter of the table known to the old physics in the form of the limit of the analysis of the time, " vanished," if you like, as scientific investigation penetrated deeper, and showed that the chemical elements themselves had a composition. But the table is just as " real "—objectively existing apart from our knowledge of it—however deep the scientific analysis of its composition. Similarly, with consciousness, Engels has put clearly the dialectical materialist position on this subject :

> " . . . . the material sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality. . . . . our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the

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brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter" (F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 35. Martin Lawrence edition). And again, "thought and consciousness . . . . are products of the human brain" (F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 44-45. Martin Lawrence edition).

If Schmalhausen had pondered these statements he would not have asked the above questions, nor have given the above-mentioned confused and confusing discussion of "reality." Generally Schmalhausen needs to study more of the classics of dialectical materialism before he ranges outside his speciality into the field of philosophy in general. Within his own field, as a psychologist, where *practice* controls theory, as in other sciences, he has done useful work, but he has weakened it by these excursions into doubtful philosophical fields.

JONATHAN KEMP.

## UNRAVELLING THE TANGLE.

*Capitalism and the Consumer*. By Fred Henderson. Allen & Unwin. pp. 156. 4s. 6d.

*Social Credit Discredited*. By Maurice Dobb. Martin Lawrence. pp. 30. 3d.

*Social Credit : An Economic Analysis*. By John Strachey. Gollancz and Workers' Bookshop. pp. 24. 3d.

A SUFFERING humanity owes a deep debt of gratitude to these authors. They have tackled Major Douglas, followed him through nebulous, sticky, tangled mazes of words and figures, and left him stunned and helpless.

The two pamphlets, and the second part of the book, deal entirely with "Social Credit." Dobb points out that the whole conception of Social Credit ignores the fact of class divisions in society, and gives a clear statement of what really happens in capitalist production, as well as showing convincingly that what Major Douglas says happens, just doesn't happen. Dobb's pamphlet is particularly valuable because it points out the actual effect of social credit and all other money-reform propaganda, namely, to distract people, especially middle-class people, from the facts of the class struggle, and therefore to make them an easy prey to fascism. That is why "anti-finance" propaganda plays a large part in the fascist platform in all countries.

Strachey's pamphlet is built up from the chapter on this subject in his *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis*. It is clear and convincing, but I think does not adequately bring out the essential feature of the class division in society. The section of Fred Henderson's book, which deals with Social Credit is extremely good: clear and devastating, and particularly satisfying in showing that the monetary transactions in which Major Douglas trips himself up are essentially a division of products *in a class ratio*. The early part of the book has also some very good criticisms of the capitalist system; it is clear and helpful on many points, but it is a pity that, in his effort to avoid Marxist phrases, he uses the slightly mystical conception of "consumer purpose," which tends to obscure the real point he is making.

E. B.

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# *The Appeal Fund*

A RATHER ominous fluctuation has again occurred in the receipts to the Debt Fund, only just over £4 having been collected when well over £10 is needed at any rate to meet the monthly deficit of £28, quite apart from assisting in liquidating the accumulated Debt.

We would appeal to all readers to do their utmost to assist us, not only to repair this setback which has taken place as regards the Debt Fund and to secure that this month a bigger hole is made in it than ever before, but also to undertake to contribute to the monthly Guarantee Fund. For this month, though we have received one new guarantee from an anonymous reader to pay £1 a month, this is more than counterbalanced by the fact that several others, whose guarantees amounted to £3 5s. 0d. a month and who have been generously supporting the MONTHLY in some cases for a year or more, are compelled to terminate their guarantees.

The MONTHLY, therefore, makes for May an urgent Double Appeal. First for the Debt Fund, and secondly for new monthly Guarantors.

Please do not hesitate, but do what you can immediately to fill in either (or both) of the forms to be found overleaf.

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Backward Europe and Progressive Asia — V. I. Lenin

Book Reviews


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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS


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Problems of Labour Policy — D. Freeman, R. F. St. J. Reade, E. Shearer, Prof. G. Catlin

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS


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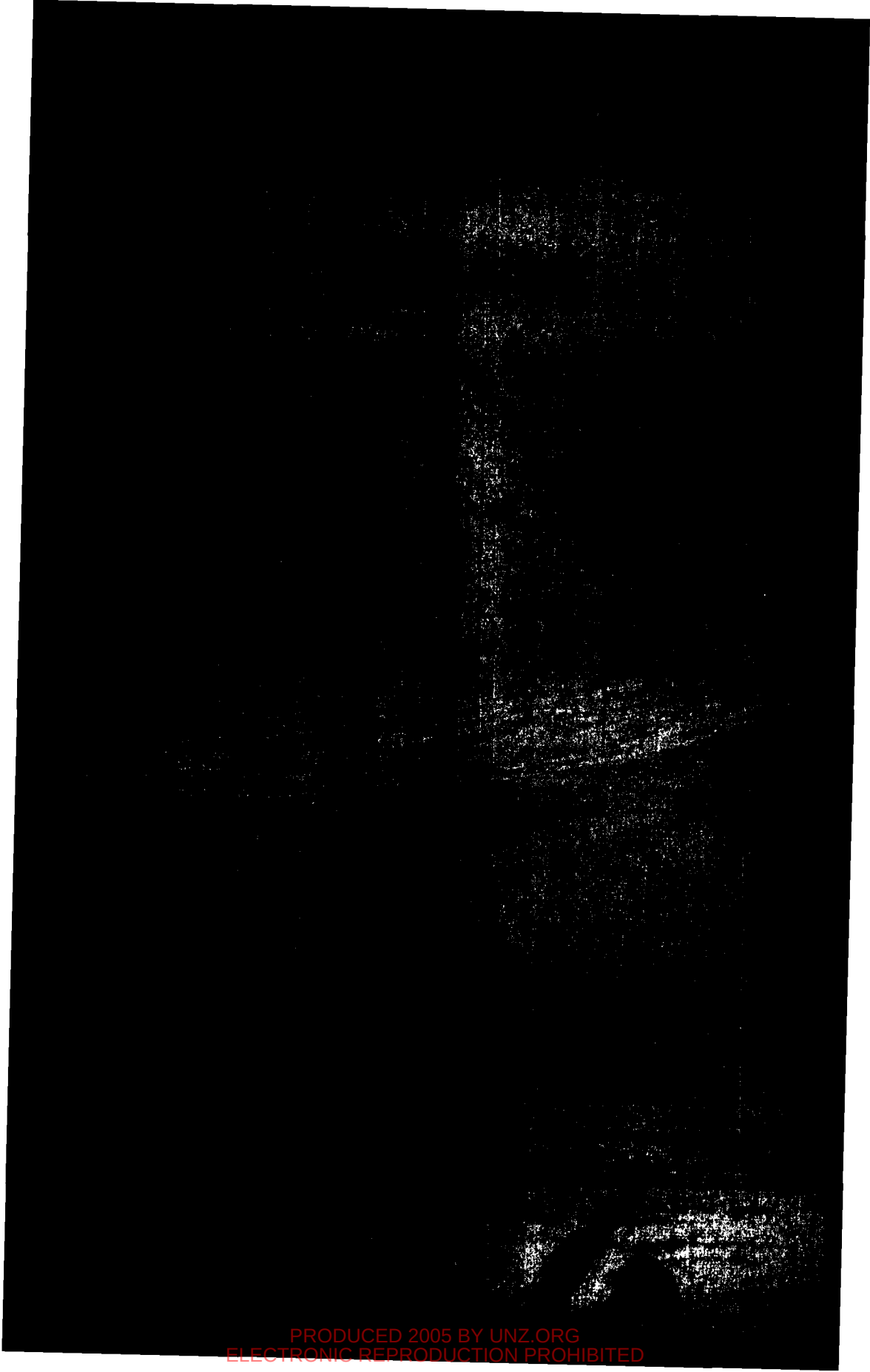

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